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Community Oriented Radio Stations and Indigenous Inclusion in Cauca,
Colombia.

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Communication

by

Diego Mauricio Cortes

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Professor Daniel Hallin, Chair
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2017

The Dissertation of Diego Mauricio Cortes is approved and is acceptable in
quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Signature Page.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Figures.....	v
Acknowledgements.....	vi
Vita.....	viii
Abstract.....	ix
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: ACPO's Radio Sutatenza in Cauca.....	28
Chapter 2: The Rise of Community Radio.....	77
Chapter 3: Public Interest Indigenous Radio Stations.....	96
Chapter 4: Evangelical Radio Stations.....	158
Chapter 5: Institutional Boureocratization and Indigenous Media Law	209
Chapter 6: Returning to the Roots: Indigenous Epistemology and Communication in Times of Inclusion.....	259
Conclusion.....	289
Bibliography.....	303

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 6.1: The Square Cross at Puma Punko Tiwanaku.....	270
Figure 6.2: Tawa Panqua.....	272
Figure 6.3: Infograma.....	279
Figure 6.4: The Making.....	279
Figure 6.5: Displaying our Work.....	280
Figure 6.6: Origen/Chu Kutrik Amtruiwan.....	283
Figure 6.7: Unidad/Lata Lata.....	284

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Community Oriented Radio Stations and Indigenous Inclusion in Cauca,
Colombia.

by

Diego Mauricio Cortes

Doctor of Philosophy in Communication

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Professor Daniel Hallin, Chair
Professor Natalia Roudakova, Co-Chair

For more than 50 years, Catholic and evangelical missionaries, the State, international aid agencies and indigenous organizations have widely used radio stations as tools for promoting literacy, introducing new agricultural techniques, evangelization, and protection of indigenous languages within indigenous societies in Colombia. Yet, we do not really know the impact of these radio stations on the indigenous people's political, social, and cultural life.

This dissertation assesses the impact of community radio, focusing on two of the most politically involved indigenous communities of Colombia – the Misak and the Nasa people from the Cauca region. In addition to founding the Colombian indigenous movement, the Misaks and the Nasas have long been involved in community oriented media projects, including the Catholic Church’s Radio Sutatenza, community radio stations, and evangelical radio stations. My hypothesis is that these radio stations have been fundamental tools to promote indigenous inclusion into the modern Colombian society.

This process of indigenous inclusion, however, has brought new challenges for indigenous people, including dependency on external funding, corruption, and bureaucratization of indigenous organizations. As a response, indigenous grassroots are currently proposing other communication practices and theories in order to resist the contradictions brought by this modernization process.

Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation is to analyze the role that indigenous communication, especially community oriented radio stations, have played in the process of indigenous people's inclusion in Colombia. Since the 1940s, the Colombian government, the Catholic and evangelical Churches, and international donors, such as USAID, have launched and supported radio projects with the aim of "modernizing" disenfranchised sectors of the population. Even though these communicative programs have resulted in positive results for the indigenous political process developed during the last 40 years, this dissertation shows that the overall contributions of these radio stations are very paradoxical.

During the same period of time when community oriented radio stations have been operating, the relationship between indigenous people – one of the main populations targeted by these radio initiatives – and the State has dramatically changed. From being considered as subjects in need of external tutelage, the indigenous people are currently enjoying a series of legal privileges, including the right of territorial autonomy and self-governance within their territories. These privileges are based on recognition of Colombia as a pluri-cultural and multi-ethnic nation by the 1991 Constitution. This political inclusion, however, has brought new social and economic challenges for indigenous communities.

This dissertation aims to examine the role of three radio projects – Radio Sutatenza, State funded community radio stations, and evangelical radio stations – in the political process that resulted in the inclusion of indigenous people as subjects of

rights for first time in Colombian history. Through this analysis, I am not only discussing the contributions and limitations of community oriented radio stations. Perhaps more important, this dissertation aims to contribute to the understanding of the State's, the Catholic, and evangelical churches', and international agencies' visions about "indigenous inclusion" and the subsequent response of the indigenous movement. For this study, I am focusing on the cases of the Misak and, to a lesser extent, the Nasa people from the Cauca region – two of the pioneers of indigenous mobilization as well as community media practitioners in Colombia.

Before introducing the content of each chapter, this introduction starts with a discussion of the theoretical framework from which this entire project is inspired. The main premise of this thesis is that "indigenous" people is a constructed category, which since its invention at the moment of the Spanish arrival in 1492 has oscillated between politics of exclusion and inclusion from the Spanish colonial administration and the subsequent independent Colombian nation-State. Through this view, it is possible to see the flaws and contradictions of the idea of inclusion, and to contribute to the proposing a political projection that goes beyond the boundaries of the exclusion-inclusion dichotomy.

Following this discussion, the incidence of the 1991 Colombian constitution into the indigenous people's lives is discussed. This constitution represents an historical moment when the indigenous people passed from being subjects of political exclusion, into a system of inclusion.

Decolonial Theory and exclusion/inclusion

This dissertation is highly influenced by liberation philosophy, especially by the work of Enrique Dussel. As Mignolo (1995) explains, Dussel proposes a critique of the historical colonial process in Latin America. The final goal of Dussel's criticism is to promote routes for what he calls as "trans-modernity", which would allow the coexistence between western and non-western epistemes¹.

Before elaborating this philosophical construction, Dussel starts unveiling the "myth of modernity":

Modernity is, for many (for Jurgen Habermas or Charles Taylor, for example), an essentially or exclusively European phenomenon. [...] I will argue that modernity is, in fact, a European phenomenon, but one constituted in a dialectical relation with a non-European alterity that is its ultimate content. Modernity appears when Europe affirms itself as the "center" of the World History [...] the "periphery" that surrounds this center is consequently part of its self-definition [...]

According to my central thesis, 1492 is the date of the "birth" of modernity, although its gestation involves a preceding "intrauterine" process of growth [...] So, if 1492 is the moment of birth of modernity as a concept, the moment of origin of a very particular myth of sacrificial violence, it also marks the origin of a process of concealment or misrecognition of the non-European [...] (In Mignolo, 1995: 31).

Here, Dussel explains that the "discovery" of what Europeans named as "America" opened the door for what is now known as modernity. Before 1492, Europe was a

¹ My use of the word episteme comes from Kuokkanen's (2011) definition. She explains that episteme and epistemology are a quite broad and flexible terms for indigenous people's discourse and they defer from their traditional use western philosophy. In western philosophical discourse, "epistemology" is usually defined as "the study of knowledge". For indigenous discourse, episteme and epistemology are synonymous of systems of knowledge, way of thinking, worldview, and traditional indigenous philosophy. They also contains elements of philosophy, cosmology, ontology, and religion. She prefers to use epistemes over epistemology "in part because the former refers to and includes the notion of the worldview" (Kuokkanen, 2011: 55).

backwards and peripheral area, which remained on the shadows of the Muslim world for more than 6 centuries. The discovery of America allowed the consolidation of Europe as the cultural and economic center thanks to the wealth expropriated from “new world” (a concept that connotes “emptiness”, depicting the European disdain against the pre-hispanic cultures from the Americas), permitting the development of mercantilist and the following industrial capitalism. In order to excuse the savage domination over the pre-hispanic population required for this capitalist processes, Europeans deemed their own culture as superior (Dussel, 1994: 29).

Dussels’ thought challenges the description of Hegel, and many other European and North American intellectuals, who consider modernity as a positive internal European phenomenon in which reason started to prevail over superstition. This Eurocentric historical narrative is highly problematic because, among other things, it obscures the contribution of other cultures into what is being appropriated and reframed as “western thought” (Amin, 1989) and hides “the irrational and violent praxis of modernity” (Dussel, 1994: 2008).

Dussel furthers his criticism of what he calls the “myth of modernity” explaining six basic features of this philosophical movement. 1. The modern European civilization is self-characterized as “superior”. 2. This “superiority” demands the development of the “primitive”, “barbaric”, and “rude” non-Europeans. 3. This development requires following the European development model. 4. Since the “barbaric” generally opposes change, Europeans need to exercise violence to carry this developmental process. 5. This process produces victims, but they are presented as inevitable sacrifices. 6. For the

“modern”, the “barbaric” is responsible of their situation. This allows the “modern” to present themselves, not only as innocents, but as emancipators. 7. Lastly, due to the “civilizing” character of “modernity”, the suffering, the cost, and the sacrifices involved in the “modernization” process of the dominated “other” are interpreted as inevitable (Dussel, 1994: 208).

Modernization is a product of a long process of philosophical rationalization that was encouraged by the European arrival to the Americas and the final defeat of the Muslim regime in Europe. For this reason, both these events marked the end of the European middle ages and the beginning of the modern era, according to Dussel. For the pre-hispanic cultures, the arrival of Europeans signified the destruction of their world and the integration of these populations into European history as subjugated subjects named as “indigenous people” (Dussel, 1994: 181).

I argue that this colonial integration process has oscillated between two strategies – inclusion and exclusion – from the 16th century until nowadays. One event that makes it possible to understand the genesis and marks the genealogy of these two concepts is the Valladolid Debate (1550-1555).

Concerned with criticism about the legitimate right over the “new world” granted by the Pope Alexander VI, King Charles V suspended any further exploration in the newly discovered world until a panel composed by theologians and jurists debated and defined the just or unjust character of the conquest of the Americas. This debate, carried in the city of Valladolid in 1550-1551, confronted two approaches of the

conquest: the political, represented by the jurist Giles de Sepulveda, and the philosophical, represented by the Dominican friar Bartolome de Las Casas.

According to Maestre Sanchez (2004), Sepulveda and Las Casas agreed on various issues, including the urgent evangelization of the newly discovered population. The main opposition between these two approaches, however, was about the nature of the inhabitants of the “new world”. For Sepulveda, on one hand, the “Indians” were inferior beings destined to serve the superior Christian European race. Las Casas, on the other hand, defended the thesis that the indigenous people were beings with the potential of becoming humans at the same level than the Europeans (Robles, 2013: 197).

In addition to the disagreement on the “natural tendency of servitude” of the Indians, there were other points in which Sepulveda and Las Casas disagreed. Sepulveda considered legitimate the employment of force in case of resistance. He went even further assuring that those conquest wars were in beneficial of the Indians since they liberate them from paganism and corrupted rituals, such as human sacrifices (Maestre Sanchez, 2004: 122). Sepulveda also believed in the necessity of erasing all cultural traces of indigenous people in order to successfully transplant the Catholic traditions into these subjects. Meanwhile, Las Casas opposed violence, considering that persuasion was the only possible path for an effective evangelization (122). He also believed as positive the conservation of some ethical values of the indigenous cultures.

Las Casas’ “cultural protectionism” is far from being an act of respect for the ontological “otherness” of pre-hispanic cultures. Rather, it was an act of defending their own Christian beliefs. As member of the Dominican Order, Las Casas believed in the

necessity of protecting the Indians from the bad actions of the Spanish conquistadores since they were populations who emulated the sinless life of Adam and Evan before the “original sin”. Following this thought, Las Casas believed in the possibility of creating Eden type of republics that would mix the sinless “Indian” population with Spaniards who lived according to highest Christian values. For this, he proposed to bring from Europe people who were not looking for fortune and fame, like the regular conquistadores, but who were willing to live in egalitarian and multicultural communities. After a failed attempt in the Antillas Islands in 1519, the establishment of these *Lacasistas* communities was tried at the region where the Venezuelan city of Cumana is currently located. This project failed when more than 10 thousand indigenous people, exasperated for the harassment and abuses of the Spaniards, attacked the convent of this city and killed a number of Spaniards in 1521 (Robles, 2013: 161-165).

Since the Valladolid Debate, Sepulveda’s and Las Casas’ thought have continued influencing the policies and approaches over indigenous populations. I argue that Sepulveda’s philosophical position represented the ideological bases of the politics of exclusion employed by the colonial as well as the later republican Latin American States against indigenous people. Since indigenous cultures were deemed as inferior and in opposition to modernization, exclusionists believed that the members of these cultures did not have the capacity of governing themselves, making necessary the tutorage of external individuals and institutions. As a result, the colonial and republican Colombian State established laws based on the inferiority of the Indians. A clear example of this is the Law 89 of 1890, which determined “como deben ser gobernados

los salvajes que vayan reduciéndose a la vida civilizada” (how the savages that are becoming civilized should be governed) (Jimenez, 2014).

Ironically, even though the Law 89 of 1890 reduced indigenous people as “semi-slaves” and “savages”, it also imposed some protections for indigenous lands that prevented the total dissolution of indigenous cabildos during the 20th century (Pineda, 2002). In order to enforce the Law 89 of 1890 and many others of this type, the colonial administration and the independent State created mechanisms of control that stipulated the power of private entities, such as *encomenderos*, landowners, and members of the Catholic Church, over indigenous populations. In addition to control the mobility and property of indigenous populations, this private tutelage also sought to destroy the reminiscences of pre-hispanic cultures by forbidding the use of speak indigenous languages and the practice religious of ceremonies, among other things. This cultural exclusion resulted in tangible processes of political, economic, and social exclusions and high levels of dehumanization. In this work, the system of exclusion endured by the indigenous people of Cauca become evident in the analysis of ACPO’s Radio Sutatenza in Chapter One.

Due to the political mobilization of indigenous people during the last half of the 20th century, in which, I argue, ACPO’s Radio Sutatenza played an indirect, but very important role, the dominant system of exclusion was transformed into a system of inclusion. This system of inclusion, which is marked by the ratification of Colombia as a multi-ethnic and pluri-cultural nation by the 1991 Constitution, is inspired by various ideas of the *Lacasista* thought. First, it regards indigenous people as capable of

participating in the political, social, and economic dynamics of the Colombian nation-state. This recognition facilitated the political participation of indigenous people into the political Colombian process by launching a series of initiatives, such as the provision of two permanent seats for indigenous representatives in the Colombian congress, the promotion of the self-administration of the resources for education and health within indigenous territories, and the creation of indigenous political parties.

Second, this incorporation seeks to protect some cultural features of indigenous people, such as language and local forms of governance. These protected cultural features accord, or at least do not collide, with the modernizing and developmental projections of the State and international agencies. A clear example of this is the promotion of local forms of indigenous self-administration of the resources for education and health, which contributed to the Neoliberal decentralization of the provision of public services (see chapter five). In other words, inclusion not only means improvement of the lives of indigenous people, but also the incorporation of these populations into the political, economic and cultural dynamics of the Colombian nation-State. I argue that inclusion represents a very important step forward in the protection of the members of indigenous communities as individual human beings, but it is very limited for the (re)construction of collective indigenous epistemes.

The 1991 Colombian Constitution and the Indigenous Movement

During the first years of the 1990s, the Colombian State was emerged on a harsh political and social turmoil due to the increasing power of drug-cartels, the assassination

of more than 3000 members of the leftist party Union Patriótica (UP), and the murder of three presidential candidates for the 1990 elections (Kirk, 2003: 63-64, 79-83, 90,128). Seeking to restore political legitimacy, President Cesar Gaviria Trujillo (1990-1994) issued the Ordinance 1926 of 1990, establishing an electoral process for a National Constitution Assembly to reform the 1886 Colombian constitution (Ballen, 1991: III). The indigenous movement assumed this project as an important opportunity to strengthen their political participation at national level. In November of 1990, after two years of internal debate, the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC) presented the document *The Colombia We Want*, which illustrated the political project proposed by the indigenous people. According to this document, the Indigenous movement believed that the Colombian State should be:

1. A participatory and pluralistic democracy, with rights for territorial organization and with instruments to guarantee the participation of minorities into political processes.
2. Respectful to human rights and other legal frameworks that guarantee life, dignity, and social rights. It also should eliminate all forms of discrimination promoted by any of its branch, including the executive one.
3. Capable of guaranteeing justice and peace, through the cultivation of ideological and political tolerance and the promotion of peaceful conflict solutions.
4. Protective to the environment and the Indigenous culture. It should promote the rational use of natural resources, biodiversity, the preservation of ecosystems, and land use. The protection of the environment should include an integral agrarian reform that seeks a better and more democratic use of the country's resources.
5. Supportive to fair economic development. Fair economy implies a mixed economy that guarantees communitarianism, the support of the State, and more rigorous control over private property (Leger, 1994:69).

As these points illustrates, the ONIC agenda did not only involve indigenous problems, but also issues that affected other sectors of the Colombian society. This strategy aimed to create support networks with other disenfranchised sectors, such as Afro-Colombians and urban working class, in order to obtain a seat in the 1991 National Constitution Assemble (NCA).

To avoid confusions, the ONIC divided their political agenda into two categories; proposals around national interest (democracy, human rights, ecology, public force) and specific indigenous proposals (multiculturalism, ethnic groups, territorial autonomy, cultural identity, and collective ownership of land) (Leger, 1994:66). Another indigenous organization, the Indigenous Authorities of Colombia (AICO) also nominated its own candidate for a seat on the constitutional assembly and their campaign also received the support of non-indigenous sectors of the Colombian society (Rappaport, 2005: 2, Leger, 1994: 67). Similarly to the ONIC campaign case, various non-indigenous sectors supported AICO candidacy (Lager, 1994:70). At the end, the two indigenous candidates of these collectivities, Francisco Rojas Birry (ONIC) and Lorenzo Muelas (AISO), were elected to the National Constitutional Assembly (67). A third indigenous delegate from the demobilized indigenous self-defense Armed Movement Quintin Lame (MAQL)², Alfonso Pena Chepe, participated in the

² The MAQL was founded in 1984, after the assassination of the Catholic priest, and Nasa leader, Alvaro Ulcue Chocue. This group aimed to protect the indigenous communities, especially in Cauca, from the actions of land owners, the State, as well as the leftist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, FARC) (Laurent, 2005: 98).

constitutional assembly as part of the demobilization accord signed with the government (Leger, 1994:68).

The Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization (ILO) was one of the principal political weapons that indigenous representatives had for the approval of their constitutional proposals in the 1991 Constitutional Assembly. Due to the political pressure of the indigenous movement, Colombia became one of the first countries in the world to ratify this international convention in 1989 (Sanchez, Roldan, and Sanchez 1993: 32).

The participation of the indigenous organizations in the National Constitutional Assembly was very successful. They achieved the establishment of an effective political coalition with center-left sectors and with the Liberal Party, who was dominated by neoliberals who sought the strength of decentralization agenda. Due to the powerful coalition that supported the neoliberal program, the indigenous representatives decided to focus on achieving constitutional rights for indigenous and, to a lesser extent, Afro-Colombians rather than challenging the well establish neoliberal economic program (Van Cott, 2006: 290). These indigenous representatives achieved the Constitutional recognition of Colombia as a multicultural nation for first time in the history of this nation. Throughout the 1991 constitution it is possible to find articles that show the multicultural spirit of this document. For instance, Article 7 of the 1991 Colombian Constitution stipulates: “the State shall recognize and protect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Colombian nation” (Leger, 1994: 76). Article 70 (in the chapter on social, economic and cultural rights) adds “the State shall recognize the equality and

dignity of all cultures which live together in the country” (77). This recognition has been one of the most important political victories of the indigenous people. For the first time in history, the Colombian constitution recognized a multiplicity of cultures (religions, languages, and customs) within its territory. This marks a drastic change from the government’s attempts to integrate by forcing indigenous cultures into the mainstream society (76, 77).

In addition to the mobilization and organizational power of indigenous organizations, these multicultural Constitutional reforms were also possible for the intervention of transnational organizations motivated by hegemonic ideas on modernization and development. Since the 1980s, for instance, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank have been two of the most active transnational institutions in supporting political agendas that sought to transform the State’s “inefficient” and corporative structure into a “modern,” “efficient,” and decentralized one. These transnational institutions have deemed historically excluded people and territories, such as the indigenous and Afros, as great “opportunities” for national economies in terms of development and human capital (Davis, 2002: 232). In fact, studies from these transnational institutions explain that, through the inclusion of these populations into these developmental plans, the potential for social tensions would eventually diminish (232). In the Colombian case, the multicultural agendas of these powerful transactional organizations started to be aggressively adopted since the presidency of Belisario Betancourt, who initiated the decentralization process in 1986. These decentralization reforms sought to withdraw the responsibility of the national into

regional governments by democratizing local institutions, increasing economic resources at local levels, and expanding local power. Indigenous people took advantage of this opportunity, starting to participate in electoral politics at regional and national levels, and creating their own internal institutions for governing (Laurent, 2005: 139).

In a nutshell, the 1991 Constitutional reform provided new sets of legal rights, protections and venues for political participation for indigenous people, but it also set a political landscape which transformed the dynamics of power and control of the State and private interests over indigenous people.

Inclusion and Community Oriented Radio Station

Through this dissertation I show how communication in general, and radio in particular, have been used as instrument for promoting indigenous inclusion. For this reason, I argue, the analysis of indigenous communication – process in which indigenous organization, the State, the Catholic and the evangelical Churches and international agencies have intervened – unveils some of the paradoxical outcomes of this process. As is shown in Chapter Five, inclusion has brought positive outcomes for indigenous people, but it also has resulted in, among other things, new forms of political and social control from the State over the indigenous people, such as cooptation of the leadership, dependency on external donors, and legislation that restricts the indigenous people's actions and possibilities of resistance against the modernist developmental agenda of the State.

Overall, inclusion here is understood as another method of control that seeks to maintain the indigenous people's subordination and the disappearance of their cultures. This method is, perhaps, less violent than the regime of exclusion, but not less harmful. For this reason, this dissertation also touches a body of research that proposes a third way that goes beyond the false dichotomy of inclusion and exclusion. This research body, introduced in Chapter Six, employs a variety of communication methodologies, that include oral tradition, architecture, music, and art, with the aim to contribute to the (re)construction of indigenous epistememes. This epistemic reconstruction, I argue, goes against the politics of inclusion since, among others, it challenges the idea of the "noble savage" – another inheritance from Lacasista thought – promoted by functionaries of the State, international cooperation agencies, and even the majority of the indigenous organizations and, even more important, it offers the opportunity to imagine more egalitarian, sustainable, and less individualistic systems of living.

Radio stations, the State, inclusion, and its outcomes.

As chapter 2 discusses, Colombia, along with other Latin American nations, such as Bolivia, possess a very rich history of grassroots oriented radio projects. This rich history is a result, in great part, of the success of the Colombian ACPO's Radio Sutatenza and the Bolivian miner's radios. These projects have motivated members of the civil society, State institutions, and international organizations to launch, support and invest resources in the construction and consolidation of media oriented to serve disenfranchised communities throughout the continent. Among some of the most

important, famous, and successful of these media experiences, there is the Zapatista experience that has contributed enormously in the internationalization and the internal strengthen of the Zapatista movement (Halkin, 2008 and Rodriguez, Ferron, and Shamas, 2014).

Due to the broad scope covered the by concept of grassroots media, it is important to clarify the target of this dissertation. It aims to provide a critique of the media projects oriented to serve indigenous people, but with emphasis on those strongly sponsored by external entities, such as the State, the catholic and evangelical churches, and international aid agencies. Specifically, this dissertation focuses on the case of ACPO's Radio Sutatenza – a Catholic educational radio project that sought the modernization of the Colombian peasantry, especially the indigenous people, who were considered as the most backward sector within this group –, indigenous community radio stations – sponsored by the State and international aid agencies –, and evangelical radio stations – sponsored by evangelical organizations and controlled by evangelical members of the indigenous communities. All this in the context of Cauca, the home of the Misaks and the Nasas, two of the most political and media involved indigenous groups in Colombia.

In Latin America, the Mexican case is one of the most studied in relation to State and development of media for indigenous communities. In 1979, the Mexican State started the installation of 21 radio stations, within areas with large presence of indigenous people, as a part of the cultural agenda of the restructured Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI) and the later founded Comision Nacional para el Desarrollo de los

Pueblos Indigenas (CNDPI) (Castells, 2011: 124). As Ramos and Castells (2010) explains, these radio stations are part of a State policy on indigenous media, which also included the development of video production. This policy has been marked by the State's ambiguous historical approach to indigenous people. On one hand, the Mexican State has historically fomented pride in the country's native heritage, but at the other hand, its policies have focused in the assimilation of indigenous people into the Mexican mainstream society.

Differently than the Colombian State's sponsored indigenous radio stations, these radio stations have been strongly criticized for being part of a Mexican State institution, even though the indigenous people have gained more control in recent years. According to those critics, the State's control over these radios stations has made these projects "indigenistas" rather than *indigenas* or *comunitarias*. "Indigenistas", in that context, means that their approach leans towards a paternalistic attitude that seeks indigenous incorporation (Cornejo, 2013).

Castells (2011) opposes these critical voices, explaining that indigenous people have been able to appropriate those radio stations to benefit of their own political, social, and cultural agenda. Ramos (2014), who coincides in part with Castells' interpretation, explains that these radio stations allowed indigenous people to establish forms of interaction with other social sectors. This interaction, in turn, has positively transformed conceptions of indigenous people of themselves and others. However, Ramos also adds that more empirical data is needed to support those positive observations and, more important, he is skeptical for the future of this model. He believes that the new legal

frameworks, the new political realities of the indigenous people, and technological change call for other conceptions on indigenous communication.

Even though the Colombian indigenous people have been developing community oriented radio stations since the 1990s and these programs have been widely supported by the State and international aid organizations, only a few academic scholars have analyzed the impact of these media projects. As explained in Chapter Three, the few academic articles on the large history of this type of radio stations (Rodriguez and El’Gazi, 2007, and Murillo, 2008) assume the effectiveness of these participatory practices without showing strong empirical evidence.

This dissertation contributes to the literature on community media in various ways. First, it responds the call for empirical evidence about the role of State’s sponsored community radio stations at indigenous communities by presenting an ethnographic work that lasted several years. Second, it also responded to the call for community media studies that account for historical context. According to Rodriguez, Ferron, and Shamas (2014), one of the challenges for academics and researches in the field of Communication for Social Change is to open its traditional narrow focus in order to show the genesis and evolution of their case studies. In this way, they add, it would be possible to avoid simplistic narratives – i.e. the “twitter revolution” – that obscure all sorts of human relations and complex historical contexts (152-153).

In order to present a broad historical picture, this dissertation includes the cases of Radio Sutatenza and the Evangelical radios to show the full incidence of community oriented radio stations into the process of indigenous inclusion in a period of almost

fifty years. In fact, these two cases have been largely ignored, making their study another important academic contribution of this work.

Lastly, this dissertation seeks to present a more nuanced picture about the role – contributions and limitations – of community radio stations and grassroots movements. Traditionally, different characters – academics, the State, international developmental agencies – discuss community media’s incidence in very positive terms without presenting solid evidence. I believe this hyper-optimism is a result of three main situations: first, many academics and researchers of this topic have try to promote a relatively new of field called “Communication for Social Change” (Dagron and Tufte, 2006). Theoretical and methodological flaws are expected due to its novelty and the large scope. Second, various academics involved in this field are, at the same time, consultants for international and transnational aid agencies, such as USAID and UNICEF. At this point it would be important to ask whether or not these academic/consultants are embellishing the potential of community radio due to the fact that one of their sources of income comes from the continuing implementation of these projects. Lastly, as discussed in chapter 2, community radio allows many governments to fulfill grassroots’ request for accessing the production of media without genuinely affecting the economic interest of those who control the traditional mass media in those countries.

Methodology

One of the particularities of this academic work is that it is a product of a relationship of more than seven years with members of the Nasa and Misak communities. During my first year as a Masters student at the Center of Iberican and Latin American Studies (CILAS) at UCSD, more than 40 thousand Colombian indigenous people organized a thirty day mobilization against the repressive government of Alvaro Uribe Velez. Intrigued by the massiveness of this protest, one of the largest and longest in Colombian history, I started to research the way in which Colombian mass media portrayed indigenous issues for my MA project.

Thanks to this research, I had met various indigenous leaders, grassroots, and academics involved in the topic of communication, such as Taita Jeremias Tunubala, one of the Misak leaders most involved a committed with the development of community radio in Guambia, and the personnel of the Tejido de Comunicacion de la ACIN (TC-ACIN).

Thanks to Taita Jeremias' invitation into the Misak world, I was able to carry out many interviews, access internal meetings and meetings with State institutions, meet important indigenous leaders from Cauca, among other valuable experiences through various fieldwork trips and a two years residency at the Misak community.

Reflecting upon this experience, I believe that the great amount of data I collected and, more importantly, the close and reciprocal relationship I established with many people from the Misak and Nasa communities were possible thanks to the continuous and long fieldwork I carried in Cauca. During these fieldwork experiences, I witnessed how the Misak people were negatively reacting to the conduct of the vast

majority of academics that “research” about indigenous issues. They arrived, inquired about people’s lives, lectured them for – what they perceived as – “inappropriate behavior” (i.e. from drinking alcohol up to Misaks’ political preferences), left, and never returned. Those “fieldworks” generally lasted less than a pair of weeks. Unsurprisingly, people frequently express that they feel “used” by the academic world.

Looking at this panorama, I decided to have a longer, closer, but less intrusive approach during my two year fieldwork with the Misak and the Nasa people. Instead of living with members of the community, I rented a small apartment, at the municipality of Silvia, located a very short walking distance (20 minutes) from the headquarters of the Misak Communication Program (MCP) and the Misak community itself. This close, but personal space, allowed me to be present in the community, but also to organize my own research agenda and retreat when was needed. This place also served me to carry out interviews in a placid, intimate, and private atmosphere.

Another research strategy that worked very well was to establish a research group with people from the Misak community. In addition to allowing me to access to more intimate spaces within the community, this research group, composed by Rosa Maria Montano, John Montano, and Liliana Camayo – all students at the Misak University³ -- let me articulate my research goals with some of the investigative necessities of people from the community. For instance, I comprehended that the Misak was not really interested about another “positive” narrative about the history of their

³ A community educational project that provides education to members of the community who, after high school graduation, want to continue studying and do not have the resources to go outside the community.

radio station, but they were concerned about the negative effects of its project, its role in the general policies of the State towards the Misak community, and the development of other communicative alternatives beyond radio. In addition, working with this group allow me to share my fieldwork experience with members of the community, teaching them some research techniques – in relation to approaching interviewees, taking field notes, and organizing a research agenda –, and learning in depth about the daily life, expectations, and customs of the Misak community.

In addition to my place of residency, the Misak Communication Program (MCP) was another of our working spaces. The members of the MCP at the year 2014 and 2015 allowed us to participate in their daily activities, facilitated us archival information and interviews, and supported us for our work called “*Infograma de la Historia Misak*” (see chapter 6). Despite our closeness with this institution, we also achieved to keep a good relationship with political fractions not aligned with the Misak authority within the community. This was possible, precisely, because we have our own place to work (my apartment) and we also constantly visited other spaces – the evangelical radio stations, schools, and private homes – in which we established friendly relationships with other members of the community different than the authorities. In other words, establishing good relationships with common people, and not only with the authorities, was crucial to have a more complete picture about the community as well as the topic of this dissertation.

Another situation that was not easy to handle was the relationship with the Nasa people. As it is explained through this dissertation, there is a somewhat tense

relationship between the Misak and the Nasa people. Not many researchers have been able to work with both groups, due to the fact that takes time to establish a friendly relationship with these communities and, once an external person is related with one of these communities, it is more complicated to work with the other.

In order to maintain a good relationship with the Nasa community while I was living with the Misaks, I kept in contact with the people from the TC-ACIN I met in my first visit to Cauca and I took advantage of the few initiatives in which these both indigenous groups have been working together, such as the AMCIC Network meetings (chapter 3) and the negotiation roundtables for the indigenous communication law (chapter 4). This allowed me to visit Nasa territories, collect documents, and perform various interviews at the Nasa communities.

In addition to my fieldwork work with the Misak and the Nasa communities, I also performed work in various other cities, including Bogota, Cali, Popayan, and Quito (Ecuador). At those places, I interviewed Colombian policy makers, local scholars, media practitioners, and members from both communities. I participated in the construction of policy proposals on indigenous media. I also took classes of the Masters in Intercultural Communication at the Autonomous Indigenous and Intercultural University (UAIIN). And I worked at local archives and libraries.

In addition to interviews and participant observation, the other primary sources I draw for this work include ACPO Radio Sutatenza's extensive archives (documents, audio recordings, and letters from participants), resources from the Ministries of Culture and indigenous organizations, indigenous radio stations' media products, and internal

memos. My secondary sources are books found at the archives of Radio Sutatenza, local libraries, and some public and personal archives at the Misak and Nasa territories.

Dissertation Chapters

Chapter 1, “ACPO’s Radio Sutatenza in Cauca”, illustrates the paradoxical repercussion of this developmental media project in the lives of the indigenous people from Cauca, from the 1960s to 1980s. On one hand, ACPO provided basic educational tools, especially in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics, to several indigenous people who did not have a previous formal education experience due to lack of opportunities. This work was as important that many former ACPO’s students organized and led the Misak’s and Nasa’s indigenous political mobilization – the core movement behind the Constitutional political inclusion of 1991.

On the other hand, ACPO’s work aimed to modernize the indigenous population by, among others, promoting Christian values, endorsing the use of harmful agricultural techniques, and devaluating indigenous languages. Perhaps, one of the most problematic ideas promoted by ACPO’s was that illiterate people were ignorant. This idea obscures and devaluates the enormous importance of several indigenous elders who, despite their lack of command in reading, writing, and even speaking Spanish, have been an invaluable source of wisdom for their communities.

Chapter 2, “the Rise of Community Radio”, explains the theoretical and methodological changes that allowed the transition from developmental communication projects, such as ACPO’s Radio Sutatenza, to community media, such as the indigenous

community radios that appeared in the 1990s. This transition occurred paralleled to the political process through which indigenous people obtained the Constitutional recognition and their political rights. This chapter is essential, not only to understand changes in the field of communication studies and indigenous rights from the 1960s to the 1990s, but also to understand the contributions and limitations of the community media projects discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3, “Public Interest Indigenous Radio Station Stations in Cauca”, illustrates the case of community radios in Cauca, focusing on two of the most famous projects, the Misak’s Namuy Wam and the Nasa’s Radio Payumat. Since its beginnings in the 1990s -2000s, these community radio stations were projected by local indigenous governments, the State, and international aid agencies as tools for improving the lives of indigenous people in various ways, such as promoting political participation, strengthening indigenous languages, creating venues for local participation, becoming tools for denouncing human rights violations, among other promises.

Twenty years later, there is few evidence about the fulfilment of some of these points. Even worse, there are also some negative consequences for the adoption of these radio stations, such as the creation of new economic obligation into already impoverished communities, the arising of new dependencies and paternalistic relations with external donors, the undermining of less expensive, self-funded, unregulated and more inclusive forms of communication, and the forging of new forms of State control over indigenous communities via legislation. This analysis challenges romanticized views on community media which, in many cases, lack of strong empirical evidence.

Chapter 4, “Evangelical Radio Stations”, discusses one of the most popular and successful communicative strategies used by two evangelical churches located within the territory of Guambia. Through the study of these radio stations, this chapter discusses the important growth of evangelism, especially Pentecostalism, in the last 50 years in Guambia. This case is quite paradoxical. Although evangelicals promote values contrary to the collective traditions of the Andean communities – such as individualistic economic development –, they also provide important services to the most vulnerable sectors of the Misak society. For instance, evangelicals, and their radio stations, have become instruments through which people can discuss and find relief for different social and health problems, such as alcoholism and domestic violence. This analysis challenges the traditional academic views on media studies that have either ignore or largely categorized evangelical radio stations as problematic due to the historical relationship between evangelism and radical conservative organizations.

Chapter 5, “Institutional Boureocratization and Indigenous Media Law”, illustrates the paradoxes around the involvement of the main national and regional indigenous organizations in the topic of communication. After many years of ignoring the topic of communication, the main Colombian indigenous organizations decided to negotiate with the State a new law that, in principle, facilitate the creation and sustainability of indigenous media projects – radio, television, video, etc. Through the analysis of this process, this chapter shows some of the challenges that the indigenous movement endure in the era of “inclusion”, such as fragmentation between leaders and bases, the attempts of the State to co-op and divide the indigenous movement, and the

problems resulted from the “administrative autonomy” pursued by some indigenous organizations.

Chapter 6, “Returning to the Roots: Indigenous Epistemes and Communication in Times of Inclusion”, introduces the theoretical and methodological project that seeks the reconstruction of indigenous epistemes in order to make an step further in the struggle for political, economic, and social emancipation in the Andes. In relation to methodologies, this chapter illustrates the development of a communicative initiative that I contribute to, developed along with students from the Misak University. This initiative, named “*Infograma de la Historia Misak*”, aims to promote the research, discussion, and dissemination of some of the most important events of the Misak history. For this work, we collected information for over a year using different sources and methodologies, such as interviews with elders, documents from local institutions, information from different publications, among others. In addition to documenting this information through writing, we made 39 drawings that present some of the most important events of the Misak people, such as their myth of origin; their territory before the arrival of the Spanish; and their wars of resistance, among others.

Chapter 1

ACPO's Radio Sutatenza in Cauca

This chapter discusses the role that the developmental media project ACPO's Radio Sutatenza had for the indigenous people in Cauca. I argue that ACPO was fundamental for the rise and consolidation of the indigenous organizations of Cauca, and subsequently of Colombia, at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. This program introduced modernist ideas and techniques to the Misaks and the Nasas, which later became fundamental for the indigenous political project, but not much for the reconstruction and consolidation of the Misak and Nasa indigenous epistemes.

Radio Sutatenza – one of the world's pioneer programs that used radio for educational purposes – was one of the most important, but not the unique, educational strategies launched by *Accion Cultural Popular* (ACPO). ACPO, founded by the Catholic priest Jose Joaquin Salcedo in 1947, sought the improvement of the Colombian peasantry's living conditions by providing educational opportunities in a variety of topics, such as literacy, mathematics, hygiene, modern agriculture techniques, nutrition, housing improvement, sports, and the Christian faith. All this through a series of books, long plays, a weekly newspaper, videos, field staff and, of course, the programming of Radio Sutatenza. It is important to keep in mind that ACPO was the first mass educational program for rural populations in Colombia.

This chapter starts with a discussion of the ACPO's origins: its Catholic funders and its close relationship with the political Colombian elite. They both sought to improve the historically deprived conditions of the Colombian peasants in order to

prevent a communist insurrection in the countryside. Following, it is explained the way in which ACPO worked. They reached millions of peasants through the radio waves, booklets, the newspaper *El Campesino*, and a large group of collaborators on the field. Next, the role of ACPO in the rural areas of the Cauca region is discussed. As we will see, several members of the Misak and the Nasa communities became involved in this project. This is remarkable considering that these populations had historically endured a harsh discrimination from all sorts of educational opportunities, especially before the 1991 multicultural Constitution. Finally, some testimonies of former Misak ACPO participants are discussed. This shows the importance of ACPO for personal empowerment, and how these empowered subjects became fundamental figures for the indigenous political project in the following years. As we will see, the downside of this project was the diminishing of important epistemic values, such as their oral tradition and their traditional religious beliefs, of these indigenous cultures.

Functionalism and radio: the origin of ACPO's Radio Sutatenza

During the 1930s and 1940s, the Colombian Liberal government, which took power after 30 years of conservative supremacy, started to employ radio as an instrument for development, nation building, and modernization. The first initiatives of this type were launched through the first two public national radio stations, the HJN and the Radiodifusora Nacional (Silva, 2012).

Once the Conservative Party retook power with Mariano Ospina Perez (1946-1950), they decided to start supporting a small, but promising educational project called

Radio Sutatenza. Through this program, the priest Jose Joaquin Salcedo initially sought to improve the lives of the peasant population around the municipality of Sutatenza, Boyacá, who endured high levels of illiteracy (more than 80%) and partisan violence (Ferreira and Straubhaar, 1988). Due to the support of the conservative government, Salcedo's educational program rapidly extended to the entire nation.

ACPO's conception of radio as an instrument for empowerment came from the communicative theories of US scholars, such as Daniel Lerner and Wilbur Schramm. They believed that radio messages could influence people's behavior, making them to adopt similar desires and lifestyles from the so-called first world nations. Lerner, for instance, stated that "the diffusion of new ideas and information simulates the peasant to want to be a freeholding farmer, the farmer's wife to want to stop bearing children, the farmer's daughter to wear dresses and to do her hair," while Schramm assured that mass media could become fundamental tools "to build a nation with a sense of cohesion and social purpose, willing to make collective sacrifices for sake of progress" (Curran and Jim-Park, 2000).

The conservative government rapidly increased its support for Radio Sutatenza due to the decided support of the Colombian Episcopal Conference to this project. Only one year after being launched, the Ministry of Communication gave a license as operator for adult education to Radio Sutatenza. In the following year (1949), the government authorized the increase its transmission power from 250 to 1000 Watts. In October of that year, the priest Salcedo founded the non-profit organization *Accion Cultural*

Popular (ACPO) with the idea of expanding the initial radio station into a larger educational project.

The subsequent Colombian governments, a transitional military rule and liberal and conservative administrations, continued supporting ACPO. For the Colombian elite, ACPO represented a very attractive opportunity to provide affordable education to the Colombian peasantry, especially in those areas affected by high partisan violence (Helg, 1989). ACPO also obtained great support from international organizations, such as UNICEF and USAID, and powerful multinational corporations, such as American Express, the Chase Manhattan International, Pepsico, Rockefeller Brothers, General Mills, H. J. Heinz Co., and Xerox foundation (Ferreira and Straubhar, 1988). These companies supported this type of modernist projects that sought improving people's lives in areas such as malnutrition and literacy in order to pacify potentially revolutionary people and prevent Cuban type of revolutions throughout Latin America. These aid policies became consolidated throughout the program Alliance for Progress (Rojas, 2014: 19).

During its peak years, from the beginning of the 1950s up to the end of the 1970s, ACPO and the Colombian Ministry of Education launched various massive educational campaigns on different topics, such so literacy, health, housing improvement, and "healthy" entertainment, all them based on a Catholic principles and beliefs. One of those campaigns was about supporting the agrarian reform proposed by the liberal government of Alberto Lleras Camargo (1958-1962). ACPO was as important for the promotion of this reform that its auditorium, located in Bogota, hosted the event in

which the Lleras Camargo administration announced it. In his presentation, Lleras Camargo discussed the problems endured by rural populations, such as low production, infrastructure, and inequality on land tenure, and how his land reform represents the first step to resolve those problems (Rojas, 2009: 103).

Despite his promises, Lleras agrarian reform did not promote any significant redistribution or structural changes in land tenure. This reform just provided land to few fortunate who did not own any property and improved some living conditions, in relations to infrastructure, in few regions. As a reaction, ACPO assumed a critical position against this reform few months after its implementation. For instance, as Rojas (2009) shows, an editorial in ACPO weekly newspaper *El Campesino* harshly criticizes Lleras administration saying that his government launched “democratic little games like the current land reform, aimed today only to spend millions to purchase and distribute land to peasants. These peasants are condemned to misery since they do not have tools to achieve a successful production”⁴ (107). These criticisms marked the breakdown in relations between ACPO and the State, a factor that contributed to the bankruptcy and closing of ACPO as a massive educational program in the late 1980s.

The beginning of the end for ACPO started at the decade of the 1970s. At the end of the 1960s, the continued support of the State became essential for ACPO’s survival. In 1969, 39% of the resources of the Ministry of Education were allocated on ACPO (Rojas, 2014: 21). According to Rojas (2009), the importance of ACPO for the

⁴ “jueguitos democráticos como el de la reforma agraria actual, encaminada hoy solamente a gastar millones de millones de pesos de la economía nacional en comprar y repartir tierras a campesinos llamados a quebrar por no estar en capacidad de lograr una producción adecuada”.

State started to diminish with the Lleras' agrarian reform. The resources previously used for ACPO began to be sent to institutions founded for this reform, such as the Colombian Agrarian Reform Institute (INCORA), the Bank of Agricultural Credit, and the Colombian Agricultural Institute (ICA)⁵. Initially, the government continued to support ACPO through advertising in the ACPO's newspaper *El Campesino*. But, this rapidly decreased due to the pressure of the Colombian powerful media entrepreneurs who considered that these advertising purchases put them at a competitive disadvantage. Finally, the construction of schools in different regions of Colombia motivated the government of Alfonso Lopez Michelsen to completely defund ACPO in the mid-1970s. In addition, the Church cut its support to ACPO due to crisis resulting from the Colombian State Council's – the country's highest court at those years – decision of declaring ACPO independent from the Episcopal Conference. All these situations left the project at the sole mercy of international donor support, which also gradually reduced their contributions at the end of the 1970s (Rojas, 2009: 110-115).

In addition to the financial crisis, academics, social leaders and the most progressive sectors of the Catholic Church, inspired by dependency theory and liberation theology, began to criticize the ideology and methodology of ACPO. For example, Stefan Musto's, Camilo Torres' and Bertha Corridor's study "Media in the Service of Rural Development" concluded that the purpose of ACPO educations were

⁵ Instituto Colombiano de la Reforma Agraria (INCORA), la Caja de Crédito Agrario, y el Instituto Colombiano Agropecuario (ICA).

far from achieving the needed radical changes in the power structures for ending the conditions misery at the countryside (Rojas, 2009: 114).

Luis Ramiro Beltran, one of the most prominent scholars specialized in popular radio in Latin America, also became a critical voice against ACPO's methods. He explained that "despite its useful and amazing results, ACPO programs were, however, radios to the people, in a most modest way, for the people, but not of the people" (Beltran, 2010: 12)⁶. In other words, Beltran assures that ACPO was a radio that targets the peasantry; that it was made for the peasantry; but it never belonged to the peasantry since they were excluded from its planning and direction.

In similar manner, Jose Ignacio Lopez Vigil – one of the most famous popular radio station promoters and one of the funders of two of the most important associations of community media in the world, Latin American Association for Radio Education (ALER) and then the World Association of Artisans Communication (AMARC) – was more radical in his criticism against ACPO:

“(ACPO) taught to read and write, it taught thousands of Colombian peasants. On the other hand, there was no relationship between that literacy plan with development and popular organization, much less popular mobilization” (Pulleiro, 2012: 34).⁷

Despite these well framed criticisms, the contributions of ACPO to the development of rural mobilization during the last thirty years of the 20th century in Colombia are evident.

⁶ “admirables y útiles como resultaron estas [refiriéndose a los programas de alfabetización y educación de ACPO], fueron, sin embargo, radios para el pueblo y en modesto grado por el pueblo, pero no del pueblo”.

⁷ “(ACPO) enseñaba a leer y a escribir, enseñó miles de campesinos Colombianos. Y por otro lado, no había una relación entre esa alfabetización y el desarrollo, ni la organización popular, ni mucho menos la movilización popular”.

As this chapter shows, ACPO was fundamental for the rising and consolidation of the indigenous movement – one of the most important political actors at those years. As we later see, ACPO educational programs provided, for first time, very important tools – such as literacy and math skills and social capital to the indigenous people at the moment when they were one of the most excluded and segregated sectors of the Colombian society. Many of these ACPO former students became leaders, teachers, and guides of those who participated in the astonishing changes that happened to indigenous people years later.

Despite these contributions for the indigenous movement, the conservative character of ACPO, especially at its first years of operation, is undeniable. For instance, it is possible to document and follow ACPO's direct relationships with conservative sectors and organizations such as transnational corporations, the Catholic hierarchy and the Colombian State. Nonetheless, it is hard to find proofs of ACPO direct association with influential progressive organizations, such as the Asociacion de Usuarios Campesinos, Sincelejo (ANUC, Sincelejo) and the nascent indigenous organizations, such as the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca, CRIC, and the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia, ONIC.

ACPO is also criticized for the way participation was conceived. While it had some participatory mechanisms - such as the mail correspondence between listeners and ACPO producers –, the peasants did not have much influence over the educational content. The programs were structured under the guidance of international “experts” from UNICEF, the guidelines of the Colombian Episcopal Conference, and the concepts

of the Catholic Christian life (Hurtado, 2012: 72). These parties were the ones that thought and imposed the ACPO's eight ideological principles, which were:

1. ACPO is a work of the Church that aims to improve the dignity of the people, especially of the adult peasant, through a comprehensive education that cover the basic culture and prepare for the social and economic life with the base of an authentic religious formation.
2. ACPO considers that is a social duty, especially for the church, to collaborate decisively in the development of spiritual, cultural, social, family and even individual values that God has placed in each men as seeds for blooming according to the nature and the creator's plan. For this reason, it facilitates to the people the tools that would help him to fulfill its duty as an individual, family, and social member.
3. To effectively fulfill the objective pursued, ACPO should promote public awareness of the enormous problems of the countryside. This awareness should be framed on a Christian concept of agriculture and rural life, and not based on a purely technical and economic development.
4. ACPO, as an institution, is an organized, with a real sense of hierarchy, which aims to integrate its employees to the work of the Church, uniting the efforts of all in the will of apostolate, but with deep respect for their personality and initiatives
5. The activities of ACPO favor the creation of a movement developed by militants who embody a doctrine of life in a solidarity and organized action.
6. ACPO focuses its activities in the parish community. To facilitate collaboration, the parishes has the discretion to help as many, trying to use the minimum of resources. This is to awaken people's self-concerns and initiatives for improvement.
7. ACPO, as part of the action of the parish community, in a spirit of collaboration and coordination, creates an environment and provides the means to contribute to the development of other parish activities.
8. The pastor and director of ACPO educational radio movement in the parish community, takes an active position of guidance and direction of ACPO as a member of the General Assembly.⁸

1. ACCIÓN CULTURAL POPULAR es una obra de la Iglesia que tiene como fin ayudar a la dignificación del pueblo y especialmente del campesino adulto, por medio de una educación integral que abarque la cultura básica y la preparación para la vida social y económica con el fundamento de una auténtica formación religiosa.

As we can read, ACPO's rigid structures and ideological principles were not based or even interested on understanding peasant's cultures and lifestyles. They did not consider their knowledge. They did not provide open spaces for participation in ACPO's organization level. Even less, they did not consider possibilities of reconstructing any indigenous way of life, knowledge, or social structure, as a way to improve students' living conditions. Peasants, especially the members of indigenous communities, were seen as backwards. Their lifestyles, according to ACPO's principles, had to be radically changed in order to promote and consolidate the development and modernization of the Colombian countryside.

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2. ACCIÓN CULTURAL POPULAR considera que es un deber para toda la sociedad y de un modo especial para la iglesia el colaborar decididamente en el desarrollo de los valores espirituales, culturales, sociales, familiares y aún de perfección individual, que Dios ha puesto en cada uno de los hombres como semilla que habría de fructificar según la naturaleza y el plan del creador. Por eso facilita al hombre del pueblo los medios que han de ayudarlo al cumplimiento de su deber de perfección individual, familiar y social.
 3. Para cumplir eficazmente la finalidad que persigue, ACCIÓN CULTURAL POPULAR debe promover una conciencia pública de gran sensibilidad social sobre los problemas del campo, con base en un concepto cristiano de la agricultura y de la vida campesina, frente al concepto puramente técnico y económico.
 4. ACCIÓN CULTURAL POPULAR, como institución, es una idea dinámica organizada, con un auténtico sentido jerárquico, que aspira a la integración de sus colaboradores a la obra de la Iglesia, aunando los esfuerzos de todos en una voluntad de apostolado, pero con profundo respeto a su personalidad e iniciativas
 5. Las actividades de ACCIÓN CULTURAL POPULAR favorecen la creación de un movimiento desarrollado por unos militantes que encarnen una doctrina de vida en una acción solidaria organizada.
 6. ACCIÓN CULTURAL POPULAR centra sus actividades en la comunidad parroquial. Al facilitar su colaboración a las parroquias tiene el criterio de ayudar al mayor número aunque sólo sea con el mínimo de medios y elementos, para despertar en ellos inquietudes e iniciativas.
 7. ACCIÓN CULTURAL POPULAR, como parte de la acción de la comunidad parroquial, con espíritu de colaboración y coordinación, crea un ambiente y facilita unos medios que contribuyan al desarrollo de otras obras parroquiales.
 8. El párroco como director del movimiento de Escuelas Radiofónicas en la comunidad parroquial, ocupa en Acción Cultural Popular un puesto activo de orientación y dirección como miembro de la Asamblea General (Rojas, 2009).

During the 1980s, the withdrawal of support from the State and the church, and the weak relationship between ACPO and grassroots organizations, forced ACPO's leaders to sell their assets in order to pay debts. Finally, in 1990, ACPO closed its doors as a big no-profit educational organization, becoming a small, locally oriented foundation. But, again, despite its conservative, developmental, and not much participatory methods, ACPO undoubtedly influenced the lives of millions of Colombian peasants, including the indigenous population. Before discussing the role of ACPO in the process of indigenous inclusion in Cauca, we are going to see how ACPO was organized on the field in order to understand its impressive scope, in terms of coverage, structure and distribution.

How did ACPO work?

As explained before, the rapid expansion of Radio Sutatenza, possible because of State and Catholic Church support, led to the funding of ACPO in 1952. This was an institution that sought to educate the Colombian peasant population through their own produced and distributed mass media. Thanks to UNICEF assistance, ACPO developed their own educational methodology called *Fundamental Integral Education*. According to an internal study carried by Houtart y Perez (1960), this approach sought to foster modernity through the empowerment of the Colombian peasantry:

“Fundamental Integral Education (...) represents the opportunity for individuals and social groups to improve their living conditions through self and mutual help”.⁹

⁹ “Educación Fundamental Integral (...) es la capacidad de la persona social y del grupo para que sí mismos mejoren sus condiciones de vida, mediante el esfuerzo propio y ayuda mutua”.

Different communication strategies were employed to carry out this methodology. Among them were, Radio Sutatenza, the Editorial Andes, which designed and printed all sorts of textbooks and other materials that complemented radio program – books on topics, such as music, care of farm animals, geography, etc., the five textbooks for Sutatenza’s basic and progressive courses – Alphabet, Number, Health, Economy and Labor (Agriculture), and Spirituality, and the weekly newspaper *El Campesino* (Rojas, 2014: 24).

The circulation numbers of the newspaper *El Campesino* are tangible signs of the success reached by ACPO. It distributed 80,563 newspapers in 1958 – the highest in the nation after the newspaper *El Tiempo*. It also had correspondents in 19 cities and 722 municipalities¹⁰. In addition, ACPO also recorded and distributed more than 16 thousand copies of popular songs, folklore, poems, and cultural messages through the nation. These numbers are impressive considering that ACPO’s target was the rural population, which has historically endured high levels of illiteracy, educational exclusion, and very low purchase power (Rojas, 2009: 90-95).

The production and dissemination of all these media products was made possible by the ACPO’s large infrastructure. ACPO had radio production studios in Belencito (Boyacá) and in the four major cities in Colombia (Bogota, Medellin, Cali and Barranquilla). They also had large operations centers in Bogota and Sutatenza, Boyacá. ACPO also had two educational institutes for men and women, which opened in 1953 and 1958 respectively in the municipality of Sutatenza.

¹⁰ Colombia, at that time, had more than 1000 municipalities.

In these institutes people from all over Colombia received a 6-month training in leadership, which included classes on Christian values, Colombian folklore, education, agricultural techniques, among others. Those classes were run by the Catholic congregation of the Salle Christian Brothers. The young farmers who participated in this training were recommended and selected by the pastors of their hometowns. They had the mission to return to their places of origin to lead ACPO the educational projects in their regions. As a requirement to admission, the priests had to ensure that attendees came from “humble” and “honorable” peasant families, but with economic resources and property (Rojas, 2009: 93). As noted by Rojas (2009) and as we shall see in the case of the indigenous communities of Cauca, many of these young people trained in ACPO’s schools had a significant impact within their communities.

ACPO’s fieldwork operation was complex. At the center of the whole structure was the Radio Schools (RS), which were generally composed by neighbors and relatives. Each group had an “immediate assistant”, generally the one with a bit higher educational level than the other peers. This person was responsible for following the instructions broadcasted by Radio Sutatenza. These instructions were related to one of the five basic classes mentioned above, and they were complemented with the other ACPO media products – the weekly seminar, books, and recordings. Students could ask for guidelines to ACPO staff through correspondence. ACPO mail system became very popular than just a total of 521,519 letters were received and answered just between 1953 and 1967 (Rojas, 1999: 91).

In addition to student groups, immediate assistants, teachers, and broadcasters, the structure of the RS included representatives from the local parishes and visiting teachers from ACPO, who were responsible of verifying the operation of these schools. Their tasks included requesting the material needed at a specific place, reporting the number of ACPO radio transistors in the area, counting the number of students who were attending, among other tasks (Gomez, 2012: 71).

RS were organized according to three educational levels: first, a basic course in reading and writing; a second level two-year course for listeners with a basic level of literacy; and finally a three-year course for advanced students (Ferreira and Straubhaar, 1988).

The ACPO model was so successful in terms of coverage, media management and infrastructure that it served as an example and inspiration for similar projects at several Latin American nations. Among the experiences, there were the Costa Rican Institute of Radio Education - ICER; the Basic Education Program of Salvador - PEBA; Radio Education of Bolivia - ERBOL; Radio Fe y Alegría in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador; Radio Santa Marta in the Dominican Republic; the Institute of Popular Culture - INCUPO; and Cultural and Educational Development - FCE Mexico. Similarly than ACPO, all these initiatives were supported by the Catholic Church (Peppino, 1999: 131-134).

It is important to remark that the ACPO's model has not been the only one which uses radio stations for educational purposes. McAnany (1973) found five models of educational radio in the world: 1. Open Broadcast: characterized by its massive, but

unorganized audience. This model was widely used in Africa. 2. Instructional Radio: based on organized learning groups. The majority of them were related with schools and other formal educational institutions. This model was common in USA/Canada, and many countries in Asia and Africa. 3. Radio Farm Forums: a regular weekly radio program that focused on local news and dramatizations produced for specific audiences. After emission, there were discussion forums lead by local leaders. This model has widely operated in many Canadian regions. 4. Animation: emphasis on the training of local leaders who have the mission to guide, inform and create consciousness for social mobilization. It is inspired by the French tradition of group mobilization in the 1960s, especially in French colonial areas in Africa. 5. Radio Schools: based on non-formal groups. It was ACPO Radio Sutatenza's type of structure (McAnany, E. G., 1973: 4).

Radio Sutatenza and the Indigenous Communities of Cauca

I started to learn about the important role of ACPO for the indigenous communities in Cauca when I interviewed Taita Javier Calambas, one of the most historic leaders of the Misak community. Taita Javier is one of the founders of two of the pioneer indigenous organizations in Colombia, the *Cooperativa las Delicias* and the Regional Indigenous Council Cauca, CRIC. In that interview, Taita Javier Calambas commented that he and many others who participated in the first years of indigenous organization, including his brother, learned to read and write thanks to the ACPO's RS (IN1, 2014). In the archives of ACPO in Bogota, I found correspondence between

ACPO's staff and Taita Javier Calambas, confirming the relationship between this historical Misak leader and this educational project.

In this letter, dated at February 1976, Taita Javier Calambas answered ACPO's letter, which, in turn, is an answer from a letter sent by Taita Javier's brother, Felipe Calambas, who participated in leadership courses conducted by ACPO in Sutatenza, Boyacá. Here, Taita Javier claims to be an active listener of Radio Sutatenza and to have the five ACPO basic education books. He also thanks ACPO's leader Delfina Sánchez for her work, he states that some of his relatives also participated in the RS, and he assures that ACPO's RS contributed to building a better future for his community. ACPO's staff, in turn, replied in March 30, 1976.

Despite the discrepancy in the name of the ACPO leader – Javier Calambas mentions Adelina Sanchez, while ACPO's leader, Maria Del Pilar Aristizabal, mentions Ines Buitrón –, these letters are good examples of the ACPO's methodology. On one hand, these two letters show the amazing efficiency with which the ACPO team operated. They were able to answer thousands of letters from peasants, such as Javier and Felipe Calambas, in a relatively short time (it is only one month between Javier Calambas' letter and ACPO's answer). More than simply responding, ACPO's staff achieved to establish a close relationship with the peasants as the personalized answer from ACPOs' leader, Ms. Aristizabal, shows. She explains that, although she was expecting a letter from Felipe, she is happy with the answer from his brother Javier.

These letters also make evident some of the positive and negative principles involved in ACPO's work. In an Aristizabal letter, it is possible to read that “EL

IGNORANTE ES UN ESCLAVO” (the ignorant is a slave), which together with “ignorance is a sin”, were two of the most recognized slogans of ACPO for their campaign against illiteracy. As I expand later, these slogans imply the backwardness of those who cannot read and write, thus denying the importance and richness of indigenous people’s oral tradition.

In relation to ACPO’s positive aspects and contributions, Aristizabal’s letter is also charged with messages for encouragement and self-empowerment: “I want to say that we should not think that we can only make progress when a leader is next to us. No, we should think we are able to be ready for any sign of progress and use it in the best way” (CUL, 1976).¹¹ As ratified by Taita Javier Calambas and others, ACPOs’ encouragement and education training were fundamental for the formation and consolidation of the modern indigenous organization in this region.

The importance of the REs to the emergence and strengthening of the indigenous movement in Cauca is also documented by the research team of the *Catedra Nasa*. This team, composed by members of the Nasa community and external scholars, collected various testimonies about the political trajectory of the *resguardos* of Toribio, Tacueyo, and San Francisco in northern Cauca. According to the people who participated in the foundation and consolidation the CRIC (1971-1980), Radio Sutatenza was a fundamental tool for the forging of indigenous leadership at those years:

Several leaders took advantage of the radio school "Sutatenza." They went to received training to Sutatenza, Boyacá, as leaders and teachers, then returned to encourage other people. They were a

¹¹ “(...) quiero decirle que no debemos pensar que solo podemos progresar cuando tenemos al líder al lado; no, debemos pensar que somos capaces de organizarnos y prepararnos cada vez más para recibir mejor cualquier indicio de progreso y aprovecharlo al máximo”.

small group led by Guillermo Tenorio, Marcos Yule, Alcides Mendez, Celio Escue, Cristobal Secue, Gabriel Velazco, among others.

In late 1975 Father Alvaro [Ulcue] came as parish administrator of Toribio and Tacueyo and realizes the exploitation to indigenous people at all levels. He analyzed the situation at cultural level and started in 1979 a missionary work together with a group of nuns affiliated to the Lauritas.

People states that Father Alvaro began to form a group of community leaders whom he called "Lets March Together". It was a small group of people who studied legislation, indigenous rights, and the CRIC's indigenous organization. Also, they studied the Bible and documents about liberation theology, such as Puebla papers. Several leaders trained by Sutatenza participated in this small group (CNU, 2002: 5).¹²

Moreover:

Advances of the decade of 1970s:

One of the biggest advances was the awakening of people's consciousness about their own exploitation and the fact that they have rights. There were strategies of awakening, such as bilingual schools – because people realized that education until then was not appropriated for indigenous people-, also clandestine meetings, Radio Sutatenza, and the workshops in Buga (CNU, 2002: 7).¹³

¹² También hay varios líderes que aprovechan la escuela radiofónica "Sutatenza." Van a capacitarse como dirigentes campesinos y alfabetizadores a Sutatenza, Boyacá, para después volver a animar el resto de la gente. Conforman un grupito guiado por Guillermo Tenorio, donde también están Marcos Yule, Alcides Méndez, Celio Escue, Cristóbal Secue, Gabriel Velazco, entre otros.

A finales del año 1975 llega el Padre Álvaro [Ulcue] como administrador de la parroquia de Toribio y Tacueyo y se da cuenta de la explotación a todos los niveles. Hace mucha reflexión de esta situación a nivel cultural y empieza en 1979 con el equipo misionero en conjunto con las hermanas Lauritas a concientizar gente.

Cuentan, que el Padre Álvaro empezó a conformar un grupo de animadores de la comunidad al cual le llamo "Marchemos Unidos". Era un grupito de análisis donde estudiaban la Legislación, los derechos indígenas, la organización indígena del CRIC. También se estudiaba la Biblia, pero más los documentos de la teología de la liberación, como por ejemplo los documentos de Puebla. A este grupito pertenecían varios líderes de Sutatenza.

¹³ Avances de la Etapa [década de los 1970s]. Uno de los mayores avances es seguramente que empieza el despertar de la conciencia de la gente sobre la explotación que se vive y sobre sus derechos. Existen estrategias para el despertar, como por ejemplo las escuelas bilingües, porque la gente se daba cuenta,

The relationship between ACPO and the strengthening of the indigenous movement during the 1970s is surprisingly ignored by the historiography of indigenous people from Cauca. However, there are many primary sources that elucidate this relationship. One of these sources are ACPO's archives in Bogota, where most of the correspondence between ACPO's participants and ACPO's staff from 1957 to 1977 is stored. In addition, there are many testimonies from former ACPO students and their relatives within the Misak and the Nasa community. For this study, I managed to meet and interview to more than 40 people who had direct relationship with ACPO – former participants and people with close relationship – mostly first degree relatives – with former participants.

In regard to the letters, thousands were found from the 42 municipalities of Cauca. More than four hundred of these letters were from or to someone located at the municipality of Silvia – the place where Guambia is located. I made a photographic archive of all letters related to the town of Silvia, in order to analyze them and then take some illustrative examples that show the link between ACPO and the birth of the modern indigenous organization in the 1970s. I also collected and analyzed several letters from and to Toribio – the municipality where a great number of Nasa leaders and founders of the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca are settled.

que la educación hasta entonces no era la apropiada para los indígenas; también las reuniones clandestinas, Radio Sutatenza, los talleres en Buga.

According to these letters, the first ACPO RS in Guambia was founded in 1963. The first organizers of these schools were nuns of the Congregation Lauritas and a few Misaks, such as Jose Antonio Almendra, in *La Campana* – one of the areas of the Misak territory. These RS were coordinated by Monsignor Gustavo Eduardo Vivas, priest at Silvia during those years, and who later became general coordinator of ACPO's RSs in the department of Cauca.

These letters make evident the disadvantageous situation and the level of exclusion endured by the Misak and Nasa people during those years. For instance, they evidence the low level of literacy among the Misak compared with non-indigenous people from the same region. The letters from Jose Lazaro Tumiña, one of the leaders of the first radio Guambia schools, are good examples of the literacy problems of the Misaks during those years:

6 de Diciembre de 1964,
 Le mando un cordial saludo y los [h]ilustrísimo señor cura párroco
 Jose Ramon Sabogal
 Buquita [¿?]
 Le manda un representante parroquial de los campesinos
 guámbianos de Colombia Cauca:
 Pues me paso y me paso a [dec]irles fui nombrado p[o]r monseñor
 VIVAS y el padre de Silvia y el Padre Ramon N[o]voa Velasco.
 Soy el compañero de Angel Jose Piedradita de Balb[o]a, Caldas.
 Pues p[o]r estos momentos y[o] [h]e ayudado al Monseñor lo más
 p[o]sible que más pud[e] solamente he vendido 80 radios entre 7
 [v]eredas en 5 meses. [H]oy tuvimos una [f]iesta de un nuevo
 teplete [¿?] de la Virgen de Lourdes en la Peña de la Campana.
 Por la [b]endicion de Monseñor Rivas
 Remite
 C.C. Jose Lazaro Tumiña
 Representante Parroquial
 Silvia, Cauca”.

When we compare this letter with others from the municipality of Silvia dated at the same year, we see big differences in relation to writing, spelling and content. For instance, this is one letter from Quizgo, another area of Silvia, outside of the resguardo de Guambia:

Quizgo Silvia, Cauca, 24 de mayo de 1965
 Señores locutores Radio Sutatenza, Bogotá
 Programa Buenos Días
 Profesores Natalia Bonilla y Emilio Alarcón
 Apre[c]iados señores: Reci[b]an mi cordial saludo y ala ve[s] felicitarlos por tan maravilloso cual lo sintoni[z]amo[s] todos los días pues ahí a[d]quirimos conocimientos para la vida práctica.
 Tambien quiero contarles que [h]a[c]e un año matriculamos la Escuela Radiofonica donde aprendi a leer y a e[s]cribir. Estoy por segia[¿?] el caso complementario pero no p[u]dimos comprar la separatas del campesino del 15 de Febrero.
 Pues a Silvia no llegaron. Y nos [h]emos quedado sin los elementos para valorar el 5 año de primaria.
 Les pido el favor de que me digan donde puedo conseguir este complemento? Porque de muchos lo necesitamos [ilegible]
 Es el Representante de EERR el cual esta tra[b]ajando por sacar adelante a nuestro [h]ermanos que no saben.
 Por estos momentos me despido de ustedes deseándoles toda clase de felicidad[e[s]]
 Atentamente
 Carmen Oliva Pillimue.

ACPO' field educators reported to their superiors in Bogotá this educational weaknesses of the Misak population. They also noted that this weaknesses, plus poverty and the cultural differences, made challenging working with the Misak and Nasa communities. For instance, ACPO's leader Benicio Ledesma – who worked for many years with members of these communities – denounced the serious condition of poverty and exclusion endured by the Nasa communities located in the area of Toribio in a letter of March, 30, 1964 (CUL, 1964).

Poverty, cultural differences, and exclusion were not the only factors that affected the relationship between ACPO's leaders with the Misak and the Nasas. In several letters ACPO leaders expressed their concerns about the lack of interest of the members of these communities about creating and participating in ACPO's RSs. For instance, on September 13, 1964, Angel Piedrahita, one of the RS leaders in Guambia, complained about the distrustfulness of the indigenous populations. He states that "all are Indians who do nothing, but drinking aguardiente, and one goes to their home, and they start talking in their language, leaving you with your mouth open"¹⁴(CUL, 1964).

Jose Antonio Rodriguez, an ACPO office staff member, responded to Piedrahita:

"We ask the giver (...) to help you solve the problems and keep you very bouncy and happy in your job as leader, despite the pressing difficulties of working with indigenous who use a different language, which (illegible) are extremely suspicious and desperately apathetic following all the directions that you are given them for their improvement" (CUL, 1964)¹⁵.

On 12 October, 1964, Piedrahita reported what he considered as the lack of commitment of the Misaks: "The people are a little reluctant to progress, it is true that there are many radios, but there are not radio schools since all of them are indigenous. They are neglected in all issues"¹⁶(CUL, 1964). In addition to the patronizing tone of this and many other references of the indigenous from the ACPO's leaders, it should be

¹⁴ "todos son indios que no hacen sino tomar aguardiente, y uno van a la casa, y se ponen a tomar aguardiente, y se ponen a hablar en lengua y dejan a uno con la boca abierta"

¹⁵ "pedimos ardientemente al dador (...) que te ayude a resolver las dificultades y te mantenga muy animoso y alegre en tu trabajo de líder a pesar de las imperiosas dificultades que implica trabajar con indígenas de distinta lengua, que (ilegible) serán tremendamente desconfiados y de una apatía desesperante para seguir a todas las orientaciones que tú les estas dado para su mejoramiento".

¹⁶ "la gente es un poco lidiosa para el progreso, es cierto que hay muchas radios, pero no hay escuelas radiofónicas por ser todos indígenas y ser descuidados en todo".

noted that those leaders considered having an indigenous language as first language, not as a cultural and intellectual asset, but as an impediment for progress.

The other problem often stated by ACPO's leaders was the indigenous people's lack of proficiency in Spanish. On March 8, 1964, Ledesma sent a letter from Toribio, Cauca, in which he complained about this problem in relation to the Nasas. In order to communicate with them, Ledesma needed translators: "The young Bolívar Rivera is coming with me to visit the veredas, this is helping me well because most of the people are Indians, and they do not even answer my greeting"¹⁷ (CUL, 1964). Three years later, Ledesma reported to his manager in Bogotá similar deficiencies among the Misaks: "There is dismay for the situation of the people (Misak) since they do not know Spanish"¹⁸ (CUL, 1967).

In addition to the language issue, ACPO's staff endured technical and infrastructure problems in their work with the indigenous people. For instance, many letters indicate the difficulties to find ACPO pedagogical materials - pamphlets, books and the newspaper *El Campesino* – in Silvia and Toribio. On March 8, 64 Ledesma wrote that there were many difficulties for the distribution of *El Campesino* in Toribio. Popayan – Cauca's capital – and Toribio did not have direct bus or cargo routes, making the shipping of the newspaper very complicated. In addition to delays and high transportation costs, the majority of these newspaper's shipments arrived incomplete: "The Semanary 'El Campesino' does not arrive directly from Popayan. It is sent first to

¹⁷ "el joven Bolívar Rivera y me está acompañando a las veredas, el cual me está sirviendo de mucho ya que la mayoría del personal son indígenas y a mí no me atienden ni el saludo".

¹⁸ "hay desaliento por la situación de que la gente (Misak) no maneja el español".

Santander. There, it is shipped after a week. That shipment always arrives incomplete”¹⁹ (CUL, 1964).

There were also many difficulties with the acquisition and maintenance of the radios. For instance, in March 22, 1964, Ledesma explained that the RSs had not started up due to the difficulties for the people in acquiring the radios needed to tune up Radio Sutatenza – only sold by ACPO and the State’s national agrarian bank, *Caja Agraria*: “The majority of the peasants are from the tribe Paez (Nasa). Although I advise them to acquire the radio, they are not convinced. Secondly, since the parish are not selling radios, it is difficult for them to spend, in addition to the cost of the radio, the cost of the transportation to Popayan from here and purchase it”²⁰ (CUL, 1964). Ledesma found a similar situation four years later in Guambia: “it is difficult keeping the schools alive because the radios either get broken or people sell them”²¹ (CUL, 1966).

Another main concern of APCO’s leaders in their work with the indigenous people was the “pagan practices” that some Misaks and Nasas carried out. For instance, Ledesma reported, on December 8, 1964, about a religious ceremony organized within the Misak territory: “yesterday 7th was organized a ceremony in the vereda La Campana, only with the purpose of blessing an image of our holy virgin in order to prevent that the Indians continue worshipping a spot that is in a rock, and that they say

¹⁹“*El Campesino* no llega aquí porque de Popayán (ilegible) lo mandan a Santander allí transborda y en esto demora una semana para llegar aquí y que además me cuenta el Padre le faltaban siempre varios números”.

²⁰“(L)a mayoría del campesinado es de una tribu de indios Páez (Nasa) que por más que se les aconseje comprar la radio no se convencen. En segundo lugar, como no hay radios en la parroquia es difícil que el campesino gaste además del valor del radio, tiene que pagar el valor del pasaje a Popayán desde acá para ir a comprarlo”.

²¹“Es difícil mantener las escuelas trabajando porque los radios o no sirven o la gente los vende”.

is the Blessed Virgin”²² (CUL, 1964). Here Ledesma refers to a traditional syncretic religious practice carried by some members of the community Misak, who believed in the miracles made by a figure located at an area called *Peña del Corazon*.

Despite the patronizing tone used to describe the Misak and the Nasa, the minimum interest given to indigenous cultures and languages, the evangelization work, and modernist approach of ACPO, it is important to reiterate the great social and political importance played by this educational program for the Misak and the Nasas. The ACPO leaders themselves quickly recognized progress, not only in the area of literacy, but also in other cultural and political aspects. On November 5, 1964, ACPO leader José Caro Neftali refers to this issue in the following way:

Toribio, November 5, 1964,
Don Hector

My attentive and respectful greetings to you, wishing that to you are well and, in the grace of God, progressing in your work at the institute. With this letter I enclose the monthly statistical report of the Radio Schools of the Parish of Toribio. Although the leading priest has told me that I can send it through him, I preferred to go to the office in Popayan and sent it myself. I have found information of the participant families, reports on the Radio Schools visits, and others. I also include reports on the radio schools, as well as transportation receipts that I have not sent before.

Overall, the radio schools are working well, however not as expected; people continue learning the importance of working for the community. We are training people in every way and above all we are making a mind change. We have created conciseness about the problems of the peasants due to our intervention in unions and other community groups. We have had a little intervention to stop the social injustices to peasants, and especially to indigenous

²² “ayer día siete se llevó a cabo en la campana una fiesta solamente con motivo de la bendición de una imagen de nuestra señora para evitar que los indígenas sigan adorando una mancha que hay en una peña que dicen ellos que es la Santísima Virgen”.

people. Discussing with the parish priest, we have realized that for indigenous people the intellectual training should be in a slower and a simpler method, starting from the principle that many do not speak Spanish. In any case, ACPO influence is spreading, they are at least praying with the radio and developing their family businesses. Although schools are few for the number of many families, our influence has been deep. So we can see an intensive movement towards housing improvement, which consists on constructing spacious houses with clay roofs.

To facilitate the work, I will learn the indigenous dialect in order to make myself understood better. All this if ACPO keep me more time here, I would gain the appreciation of the “naturals” (indigenous people) and especially their leaders. I actually developed a propaganda campaign in order to rise the interest of other organizations that may help us to help our indigenous brothers. With some (illegible), I tell you that we are struggling to make a powerful regional company because it will provide the possibility of saving these people. That company will give them the possibility of acquiring all the means of culture and development. You will have the goodness to explain if I can do something like this, I have already committed with them and I need time to do so. The company will operate in a technical manner in the lime mines owned by indigenous people. With this company we think we would be able to take out the indigenous from their backwardness since there will be a way to improve their houses, organize a commercial union, build official schools, agricultural centers and other things that benefit the community. We are waiting for your answer and we have enthusiasm, especially a great hope. I hope God wants that this crusade becomes a blessing for them.

This is also to tell you that we will stop for the holidays around December 20 (illegible). This is to confirm it, so I would be able to coordinate my things according to that date. I will need a license to spend a few days with my family: my parents are elderly and only live with one of my brothers; I leave them sick, especially my father. I have no possibilities to effectively support them, but my presence can also help them²³ (CUL, 1964).

²³ Toribio, November 5, 1964,

Don Hector,

Mi saludo atento y respetuoso para usted, deseando que se conserve muy bien y le de gracia a la buena marcha a sus trabajos en el instituto.

The work of ACPO was marked by endless contradictions, complexities, successes, and many mistakes. To learn more about the complexities of this educational project in relation to indigenous populations, the opinions of some of the Misak who participated in the ACPO's Radio Schools are later presented.

En esta carta le incluyo el informe mensual de estadística de las Escuelas Radiofonicas de la Parroquia de Toribio, aunque mi Diocesano me ha dicho que la envíe por su intermedio, pero al ir a la oficina de Popayán he encontrado allá todavía las fichas familiares, las visitas a Escuelas Radiofonicas, y otros; por lo menos lo (ilegible) enviar directamente a Bogotá lo seguiré haciendo directamente; también le incluyo los informes sobre las escuelas radiofónicas y así mismo once recibos de transporte que no se los había enviado.

En términos generales, las escuelas radiofónicas están dando buenos resultados, aunque no los esperados; la gente ya está aprendiendo a reunirse y a conocer la importancia de trabajar por la comunidad, la capacitación personal en todos los sentidos y sobre todo estamos logrando un cambio de mentalidad, cuando se ha sembrado la inquietud ante los problemas campesinos, ello debido a nuestra intervención en el sindicato, en las juntas de acción comunal, y algo de interferencia a las injusticias sociales de que son víctimas los campesinos y especialmente los indígenas. Actualmente comentando con el señor párroco, nos hemos dado cuenta que para el indígena, la capacitación intelectual debe ser más lenta y más sencilla en su método, partiendo del principio que hay muchos que no hablan el castellano ; de todas maneras la influencia de ACPO se extiende, ya que ellos por lo menos rezan el rosario con el radio y quieren desarrollar su empresa familiar y así lo vienen haciendo efectivamente ; aunque las escuelas son pocas para tantas familias, su influencia se ha dado profundamente y así vemos en la vereda intensiva un acelerado movimiento por el mejoramiento de la vivienda consistente en casas amplias con techos de teja de barro. Para facilitar el trabajo, pienso tener para el próximo año aprendido el dialecto para poder hacerse entender perfectamente con la circunstancia de ACPO me deje más tiempo acá cuando he logrado el aprecio de los naturales y especialmente el de sus directivos; efectivamente he desarrollado una campaña de propaganda con la finalidad de hacer trabajar a todas las instituciones existentes en la parroquia y despertar el interés de otras organizaciones que posiblemente nos ayudaran a levantar a nuestros hermanos indígenas. Con algo (ilegible) y como deber cumplido de la institución le cuento que estamos luchando poder hacer una poderosa empresa regional ya que en ella vemos la posibilidad de salvación de estas gentes ya que dicha empresa les dará la posibilidad de adquirir todos los medios de cultura y desarrollo. Tendrá usted la bondad de explicarme si puedo hacer algo así pero en ello me he comprometido con ellos y necesitamos tiempo para ello; la empresa en referencia será la explotación de una minas de cal de propiedad de los indígenas y de una manera técnica; esta empresa pesamos sacar a indígena de su postración ya que habrá margen para mejorar definitivamente su vivienda, darle una Cooperativa, escuelas oficiales, tecnificadora de agricultura, y otras consecuencias beneficiosas para dicha comunidad.

Estamos esperando la C.C.C. y hay entusiasmo en la gente, sobretodo una gran esperanza, quiera Dios que la cruzada sea una bendición para ellos.

También para decirle que nosotros saldremos a vacaciones por ahí el veinte de diciembre (ilegible), también para confirmar esto, para así coordinar mis cosas con miras a dicha fecha. (ilegible) hay vacaciones tendré la necesidad de una licencia para estar unos días con mi familia: mis padres están muy ancianos y solo viven con un hermano; los deje enfermos, sobretodo mi padre, no tengo posibilidades de apoyarlos efectivamente, pero mi presencia puede servirles, además (ilegible) viven en una casita antigua

Jose Neftali Caro

But before turning to the interviews, it is relevant to remark on the incredible work of those who participated as non-indigenous leaders of the ACPO's RSs. Their letters describe the immense sacrifices they endured in their mission. It is evident that ACPO represented more than a simple job opportunity. Many of them considered themselves missionaries willing to engage in sacrifices for the "salvation" of the "destitute" peasants. For instance, Jose Neftali Caro, leader at Toribio in 1964, explained: "there is enthusiasm among the people, overall a great hope. Hopefully God wants that this great crusade become a blessing for this people".²⁴ Samuel Yasno, ACPO office staff member, explained to an ACPO leader at *Las Delicias*, Guambia, named Saul in a letter dated in May 1965:

"Surely by now you managed to intensify the guidance they have acquired on their duty to become protagonists of their overall improvement, to live their baptism and confirmation in order to be apostles of the Lord. Tell me how the 25 schools in the area of radio model goes: pay attention to the formation of the assistants, without forgetting practical details such as the provision of suitable boards, booklets, etc. The attendance of the meetings, the timely provision of statistics and other information. They should unite their work in one ministry will - to act with a sense of community and to go ahead with the Lord's help"²⁵ (CUL, 1965).

²⁴ "hay entusiasmo en la gente, sobretodo una gran esperanza, quiera Dios que la cruzada sea una bendición para ellos".

²⁵ "Seguramente ya a estas alturas ya te las abras ingeniado para intensificar la orientación que ellos han adquirido sobre su deber de constituirse en protagonistas de su mejoramiento integral, de vivir su bautismo y su confirmación siendo apóstoles del señor. Cuéntame cómo va lo de las 25 escuelas radiofónicas modelo de la zona de identificación: pole el cuidado del caso a la formación de los Auxiliares, sin olvidar aquellos detalles simplemente prácticos como la conveniente dotación de tableros, cartillas, etc., el cumplimiento en las asistencias a la reunión, el suministro oportuno de las informaciones estadísticas y demás. Que unan sus trabajos en una sola voluntad de apostolado, -- que actúen con sentido de comunidad y que sigan adelante, con la ayuda del señor."

In another letter dated in November of 1967, Marco Aurelio Montaña, an ACPO leader at *Las Delicias*, Guambia, explained to his manager, Jose Rodriguez, the difficulties that his job involved:

“I would like to tell you about the traditions here, but I do not do it because this would be too long, here money is what matters, if you do not have it, you don’t eat and everything is like that. I inform you that I brought my wife and my child, and we found a small house. We are doing a lot of sacrifices, but God will help us to serve our Guambianos, who are very distrustful”²⁶ (CUL, 1967).

As a response, Euripides Triana, another ACPO manager, answered:

I fully understand the great difficulty of having to work in the midst of an indigenous culture, so different in their customs and their way of thinking. Often these cultures baffles us and we found hard the right way to make ourselves understood. So, it is not weird that they do not want to accept your help. But, you soon would get use to them, then your work would be easier so you would be able to enter to their lives. (...) Continue drilling to penetrate those minds, and so someday you would have the satisfaction that within indigenous culture there is also a good organization of radio schools. I am delighted that you have taken your lady near you, where you can watch over her and the child, of course, without unattended at any time the mission that has been entrusted to you²⁷ (CUL, 1967).

²⁶ “quisiera contarle mucho sobre las costumbres de aquí, pero hoy no lo hago porque me extiende mucho, aquí manda es la plata sino tiene uno no come y así en todo. Le informo que traje a la Señora y a mi niño, y conseguimos una casita pequeña. Estamos haciendo bastantes sacrificios pero Dios nos ha de ayudar para poder servir a nuestros Guambianos tan desconfiados”.

²⁷ “Comprendo perfectamente la gran dificultad que existe al tener que trabajar en medio de una cultura indígena, tan diferente en sus costumbres y en su modo de pensar, que muchas veces nos desconcierta y no encontramos la forma más correcta de hacernos entender. Por eso no te haga raro que ellos no quieran aceptar tu ayuda. Pero confía en que muy pronto llegarás a habituarte a ellos, entonces se te facilitara un poco tu trabajo, hasta poder entrar del todo entre ellos. (...) Sigue taladrando para poder penetrar en esas mentes, y así alguien algún día tener la satisfacción de que dentro de la Cultura Indígena también existe una buena organización de Escuelas Radiofónicas. Me alegra mucho que hayas llevado a tu señora cerca de ti, donde puedas velar por ella y por el niño, claro está sin descuidar a ningún momento al responsabilidad que tienes por la misión que te ha sido encomendada”

Because many of these leaders were not from the assigned areas and the wages were very low, they had to leave their families, travel long distances, and live in very poor conditions. However, many of them endured this situation with a very positive attitude. This is the case of Ledesma, who in a letter dated on April 23, 1964, stated that “the economic situation does not go so bad. When I am on the field I found something to eat; when I am in the parish, I eat in the hotel, pay 35 monthly, and I rest peacefully”²⁸ (CUL,1964).

The participants in the ACPO Radio Schools

It was not difficult to find members of the indigenous communities of Cauca who participated in the ACPO’s RS during the 1980s. Many of them are currently working as teachers at schools through Guambia. The challenge was to find people who participated before the 1980s, especially during the 1960s, the first decade of this educational program in Cauca. Since there had been over 50 years since its appearance in this region, many of the participants had died. Fortunately, after asking and researching in the area, I was able to meet Taita Mariano Cuchillo, member of the Misak community who participated for more than 10 years in one of the first ACPO’ RSs in Guambia. With the aid of the research team I organized with students from the *Misak Universidad*, we were able to interview him in his first language – *NamTrick*.

²⁸ “la situación económica marcha más o menos bien. Cuando estoy en el campo cualquiera me consigo algo de comer, cuando estoy en la parroquia, como en el hotel de alquiler de pieza pago \$ 35 mensuales y descanso tranquilo”.

Taita Mariano Cuchillo's testimony confirms some of the evidence found in the correspondence of ACPO mentioned above. According to him, some of the first RSs in Guambia were organized at the Tranal zone in early 1964, but the very first was founded by the Lauritas nuns at Las Delicias about a year earlier. These radio schools, according to his testimony, mainly focused on topics related to agriculture and farming.

Regarding agriculture, this educational program trained the participants in different technical strategies unknown by the Misaks. One of these strategies was the use of horizontal ditches for cultivation. They were 10 meters long, 60 centimeters deep and 40 centimeters wide. According to ACPO's technicians, these ditches were better than the vertical ones made by the Misak, especially on hills and slopes, since they prevent erosion and land desertification. The horizontal ditches were accompanied with an intensive promotion of irrigation techniques and the use of agricultural fertilizers. These techniques, according to Taita Mariano, increased significantly, but momentarily, agricultural production and allowed the use of the land in times of drought. Beyond this, Taita Mariano believes that one of the ACPO's major contributions for Guambia's agriculture was the implementation of measuring instruments, geometry, and math. According to him, the good results of the initial ACPO's agricultural initiatives aroused the people's curiosity for learning, what in turn motivated more people to organize and participate in the ACPO's RSs (IN2, 2014).

ACPO's promoters also launched several campaigns that sought to change attitudes and patterns of life of the Misak community. One of them was the campaign for housing improvement. This campaign promoted, among other things, using bricks

to build houses instead of materials such as adobe and bahareque²⁹; using systems of tubes and slopes to bring running water people's homes; and changing the habits of cooking at a wood fire settled on the floor for brick made stoves and sleeping over animal skins for beds made with cotton. According Taita Mariano and some other people who participated in the ACPO educational programs, such as Taita Eduardo Almendra – member of the Misak Communication Program for various years –, these campaigns improved the life of the Misak people not without complains and resistance. The main complaint was that ACPO's promoters never bothered to know the reasons behind the use of those materials, the advantages of their use, and the cultural significance of these practices (IN3, 2015).

In relation to these cultural and social changes, brick houses, for instance, began to be seen as manifestations of prosperity among members of the community. According to Taita Eduardo, who participated in the ACPO's RSs and ACPO's training at Sutatenza, Boyacá, during the 1980s, many people began to replace houses built in adobe, straw and clay, for houses made of brick and cement. Many acquired debts and even started to cultivate illicit crops, especially poppy, in order to afford the building of their house on those expensive materials.

The use of these new materials also produced a number of serious health problems. Brick houses are much colder than the house made in adobe and bahareque. This is very problematic since Guambia is located beyond 3000 meters above sea level, and its weather is very humid and rainy. Traditional Misak doctors, such as Taita

²⁹ Houses made in canes tied together and the walls are covered with a mixture of soil, water and twigs.

Vicente Trochez – former Governor and coordinator of Guambia’s hospital of traditional medicine, *Sierra Morena* (2014-2015) –, assure that the arrival of the brick houses coincides with the increasing cases of rheumatic and respiratory diseases that previously were not that common among the Misak people (IN4, 2015). The irony of all this is that researchers have found that adobe and bahareque can be superior to brick in several aspects, including durability, flexibility, and waterproofing (Duque, Robledo, and Muñoz, 1999).

The change from cooking on traditional bonfires to brick made stoves is also currently understood as a dramatic cultural and spiritual change for the Misak. According to Taita Mariano Cuchillo, ACPO’s teachers expressed their concern and their pity when they saw the Misak women bent for cooking. They considered this as signal of poverty and shame, without considering that, for the Misak worldview, the *Nachack* (bonfire) represents the family’s warm and unity. Families gather around the fire at all meal hours in order to share daily experiences and to listen the elders. In this regard, Velasco (2010) explains that the *Nachack* is the space:

(...) where the Guambiana’s own education emerges as the umbilical center of identity, because it symbolizes the link between the self and the territory, and where the ideal of being Misak-Misak feeds. It is in the bonfire where the thought gets structured from the knowledge imparted by elders.

And so, according to the tradition, the newborn’s navel is buried on the right side of the fire, as a symbol of union with the baby’s territory and family. Thus, he/she would be linked wherever the person is located. (Here) the person receive the education given by the family, the mom and the dad. Traditionally, there are three learning places: the field, where the Misak learn how to work the land; the kitchen (NakChack), while the elders prepare food; and

in the spare moments, when the older sat beside and teach us how to do hilados, mochilas, and chumbes.³⁰

Despite the symbolism and significance of wood fire as an object of family unity, there is also a negative side of this tradition. Wood stoves, especially in confined spaces, can cause serious medical problems. For instance, after examining hundreds of patients exposed to wood smoke, Perez, Regalado and Moran (1999) conclude that such exposure is linked to a variety of serious lung problems, such as chronic bronchitis, bronchial obstruction diseases, and acute respiratory infections.

The toxicity of the wood smoke is not the most problematic part of this tradition. The Misak, as well as other people around the world, consumes lots of products packaged or that contained plastic components. Because there is not a system of garbage collection within the Misak territory, many people discard plastic residuals by burning it on wood fires. Here it is where the tradition – or what is assumed as such – collides with sanitation. In other words, this is a clear example of how difficult it is to judge programs, such as ACPO's RSs, for the social and cultural change they promote. In any case, it would have been much less traumatic if ACPO had taken into account the reasons, rationales, and visions of the indigenous people and created venues for participation at the stage of decision-taken.

³⁰ (...) donde surge la educación propia Guambiana, como centro umbilical de la identidad, ya que simboliza el vínculo con el territorio y desde donde se nutre el ideal de ser misak- misak. Es en el fogón donde se estructura el pensamiento desde el conocimiento impartido por los mayores. Y por ello, según la tradición, al recién nacido se le enterraba el ombligo al lado derecho del fogón, como símbolo de unión con su territorio y su familia, así desde donde se encontrare, estará ligado: ... recibían la educación que le brindaba la familia, el papá y la mamá, y se trabajaba en tres sitios: en el campo, aprendiendo a trabajar la tierra; en la cocina (NakChak), mientras se preparaban los alimentos; y en los momentos libres, cuando los mayores nos sentaban a su lado para enseñarnos a hacer los hilados, las mochilas, los chumbes.

In regard to ACPOs' literacy project, Taita Mariano Cuchillo coincides with the testimonies collected in the *Catedra Nasa*, and the testimonies and letters of Taita Javier Morales both previously cited: Taita Mariano assures that the ACPO's literacy program was key for the foundation and strengthening of the indigenous movement in Cauca. In the 1960s, the vast majority of the Misak youth did not have access to schooling for many different reasons, such as the scarcity of schools; the discrimination and segregation at the schools located in Silvia; the lack of economic resources; the lack of mastering the Spanish language; and the semi-slavery production system called *terraje*, among others difficulties.

For years, Radio Sutatenza was the only accessible way to study since it was free – only at cost of the required reception equipment and its batteries – and its classes were broadcast at different times of the day. As well as the case of the Nasa community located in Toribio previously mentioned, the ACPO's RSs empowered various Misaks who would later become important political agents for the Colombian indigenous movement. We can grasp this importance in a letter from one of the Lauritas nuns dated in May 4, 1977, who explained that many leaders of the Misak community were formed by ACPO:

Dear Editorial Two Thousand administrator,
Bogota,
(...)

I have five years of service here in Silvia and I will be always attended to serve the peasant and their families that request my services. Or either the heads of the communities.

Our middle and high schools belong to the department of Cauca, the religious staff are ordinary employees, and myself is being for three years dedicated as volunteer to the service of peasants and

highly dedicated to indigenous people. You must know well about my struggle for the Integral Adult Education has focused primarily in the creation of the Radio Schools in the rural areas of the municipality of Silvia. The most welcoming initiative was taken by the peasants from Guambia. AND THIS: there are among their former students a governor (THE MOST IMPORTANT MEMBER OF THIS COMMUNITY), plus two university's students, who completed their elementary school in ACPO's Radio Schools. Over 15 teachers and educators from the Centers of Education for Adults were educated at different Radio Schools. And with 5 or 6 female high school students we work in literacy campaigns, in groups or with individuals, according of how they would need it.

I sent attached to this a photo [unfortunately is not found in the file] of the first meeting of the Cabildo, after taking office as Governor Mr. Anselmo Muelas T, and the current Mayor who was also a former leader of ACPO, Jose Montano Tombe, and 34 more members. The female students from the sixth of high school and their advisor, mother Eustaquia, gave them a glass of wine to celebrate the good rise of our former student within his indigenous government).

Thanks for your attention,
(Illegible signature)³¹

³¹ Muy estimado Sr. Administrador de
Editorial Dosmil
Bogota,

(...)

Son cinco años de servicio aquí en Silvia siempre atenta a servir al Campesino como él lo soliciten su favor y la de su familia. O bien de los jefes de las comunidades solicitantes.

El Colegio es departamental, las religiosas son empleadas común y corriente, y mi persona lleva tres años dedicada Ad-honorem para el servicio de los campesinos muy dedicada a los Indígenas. Ustedes allá bien saben mi lucha por la Educación Integral de adultos primeramente con la creación de las E.E.R.R. en las veredas del municipio de Silvia. La respuesta acogedora la tomaron los campesinos de la PARCIALIDAD DE GUAMBIA. Y ESTA: cuenta ya entre sus exalumnos un GOBERNADOR (PRIMER CARGO DEL CABILDO) más dos estudiantes de Universidad, que completaron sus estudios de primaria con la Escuela Radiofónica. Más 15 maestros o educadores de CENTROS DE E.F. DE ADULTOS. Formados en las Es. Rad. con las Alumnas de 5 y 6 Bachillerato desde alfabetización como superación de grupos o de individuos según lo necesitaren.

Envió adjunto a esta una foto de primera reunión del CABILDO de la PARCIALIDAD [no encontrada], después de tomar posesión del cargo de Gobernador el Señor Anselmo Muelas T. El Alcalde Mayor Exlíder de Acción C.P. José Montano Tombe y 34 miembros más.

As stated before, the process of literacy via ACPO's RSs brought negative consequences as well. For ACPO, not knowing how to read and write was synonymous with ignorance and sin. This is evident in many of the letters cited as well as in the ACPO's slogans "ignorance is sin" and "the ignorant would always be slaves". This point of view collides with the oral tradition that characterizes the indigenous communities. In the case of Misak community, myself and the working group from the University Misak took on the task of interviewing some community elders to learn how the Misak political process was during the 1960s and the 1970s. During those years they started to reconstruct the notion of territory; organized indigenous mobilizations; founded their first regional and national organizations, among others. Not surprisingly, even though many of them did not know how to read and write, these interviewees are incredibly knowledgeable. In fact, their testimonies and expertise are fundamental source of information for this dissertation.

Many of the elders interviewed - especially those who have not been in positions of power within or outside the community, such as the case of Maria Elena Tombé Almendra and Sebastiana Guazá – began their answers asking why we wanted to interview them. They believed that they "did not know anything" because they had never received formal education [*si nunca he ido a la escuela*] (IN5, 2014). After those

Las alumnas de Sexto Bach y la Madre Eustaquia se Asesora, les obsequiaron una copa de vino para celebrar el acenso de nuestro buen exalumno dentro de su gobierno indígena.
(...)

Gracias por su atencion
[Firma ilegible]³¹ (CUL, 1977).

introductions, the elders, most of them who speak little Spanish and cannot read or write, shared with us lots stories about their lives; how hard was to grow up in the Misak's male dominated society; the discrimination they have endured for being Misak; some of their knowledge of medicinal plants; the meaning of some symbols of the Misak philosophy; the relationship between agriculture and the moon's stations; how the Misak territorial recovery happened, among others things.

These illiterate, but wise elders have a very interesting way to narrate these events: most of the time they started from the same historical reference or the same topic – for instance, an event in their childhood, or an historical event for the community –, but they always unfolded these stories differently and answered the questions, but in a quite indirect way. How can one state that that people with so much knowledge and wisdom are “ignorant” because they do not know to read and write – as ACPO assured? Educational experiences, such as ACPO, would be very much significant if they aimed to provide complementary tools for these communities, rather than ignoring and denigrating the wisdom, knowledges, and systems of thought of grassroots' communities.

Another contentious point of ACPO's educational methodology was its evangelist character. As Castillo and Caicedo (2010) explains, Christian evangelization has been one of the principal tools employed by the State to tame and dominate indigenous and African descendent populations since colonial times (112). This evangelization had gone through different stages. During colonial times (centuries 15 to 19), it focused on persuading indigenous population of the existence of God and the

authority of the Spanish royalty. Right after the Colombian independence (1810), the Liberals suspended the role of the Church as an instrument for evangelization.

77 years later, in 1886, the Liberals and Conservatives signed a new constitution and, in 1887, the Liberal President Rafael Nuñez declared official the Catholic religion and signed a concordat with the Vatican. Through this agreement, the State gave the mission of evangelizing the populations at territories denominated *tierras de mision* to the Catholic Church. This evangelization included the provision of schooling to these populations in order to increase their economic productivity. This was when Catholic missionaries, such as the *Capuchinos* and the *Lauritas*, started to organize schools in different regions of the nation (116). Despite their presence in many territories, these school programs never developed the scope later reached by ACPO' RSs due to geographic difficulties, local resistances, and economic limitations.

ACPO, in fact, was the continuation of that missionary vision. As explained, ACPO's staff believed they were carrying a mission of evangelization within these indigenous communities. How did they carry this evangelization at the ACPO's Radio Schools? We asked Taita Mariano Cuchillo about the importance of evangelization in their experience with ACPO, and he replied:

Yes, he [ACPO's promoter] instilled much on religion. It was very strong, people were forced. They did not allow other religions. They obliged and were very strict about that, and it did not seem right. We were forced to go to church because that was the ACPO's assistant taking attendance, we had to go even if we were evangelical. For that, when someone became Protestants, the Catholics burned their houses (IN2, 2014).

ACPO's Catholic missionary spirit was particularly difficult to deal with, especially for those who were evangelicals, such as Taita Mariano Cuchillo and Taita Eduardo Almendra, and many others within the Misak community.

Empowerment and ACPO

I am thrilled to have found that all the Misaks and Nasas that participated in the ACPO's RCs and the leadership training in Sutatenza, Boyacá, who I interviewed consider this experience as one of the most positive of their lives. Many of them are now professionals in areas such as construction, agriculture, adult literacy, and school teaching. I also founded that many of them have been involved in different activities that have benefited countless people within the Misak community. This is the case of Mama Maria Rosa Tombe Tunubala, an elementary school teacher. Her case is extraordinary for two main reasons: first, the Misak community is a highly patriarchal society and, second, her achievements have been nationally recognized.

In regards to the first point, although in recent years more educational and leadership spaces have opened for Misak women – and, as we will see, the Misak community's radio station has contributed to this positive change –, this society is still very conservative in relation to established gender roles. Mama Rosa belongs to a small, but very important³², group of women who decided to challenge these roles and find a job outside of their household.

³² Nowadays, it is possible to find various women who are making a significant contribution to Misak society. For instance, Mama Asencion Velasco was elected governor of Guambia for the year 2013 and Mama Liliana Pechene Muelas was elected for governor for the 2017. She also has been the representative of Guambia before different State institutions, such as the Ministry of Agriculture; and

The second reason is that, Mama Rosa Tombe has been one of the teachers involved in the planning and execution of the educational Misak plan, along with others including a former ACPO alumni Jose Antonio Canterio. This educational project aimed to counteract the Catholic missionary education that the Misak have received at the schools. According to the Misak elders who had the chance to go to Catholic schools, the acculturation was very harsh: their language was forbidden, their spiritual beliefs banned, and their traditional clothing was mocked.

In the 1980, the Misak started to recuperate the usurped land from mestizo landowners under the idea of “recovering our land to recover everything: authority, autonomy and culture”³³. As part of that plan, they started organizing their own educational centers by involving the elders in decision-taking, taking professional training with university professors who supported indigenous cause, hiring Misak teachers, making mandatory the teaching of Misak’s language Nam-Trick, and incorporating cultural, social and economic aspects of the Misak society into the regular academic curriculum. Interestingly, this process was, in part, financed by the Christian

she had participated in different international scenarios. In addition to them, it is possible to find many women working with the Misak’s *cabildo*, many school teachers, and various studying at the Misak University and other universities. One of the woman who has served as an example for the others was the linguistic Mama Barbara Muelas. She participated actively in the Misak recuperation of land during the 1970s; composed the Misak anthem; taught for more than 30 years at the Nucleo Educativo de Guambia, one of the most important schools in the Misak territory; and she has published several books about the structure of the Misak language, Misak’s cycle of life; among other things. The community recognized her leadership electing her for Vice-governor in 2005, becoming the only women who has occupied the second most important position in the Misak political structure, and later became the first female coordinator of the Misak communication program. Despite these advances in women’s equality, men continues outnumber women in positions of power and prestige (i.e. members and employees of the *cabildo*, school teachers, traditional doctors, etc.).

³³ “recuperar la tierra para recuperarlo todo: autoridad, autonomía, y cultura”.

Children Foundation – evangelicalism will be discussed in Chapter four (F. Compartir, 115).

Before joining the Misak educational program, Mama Rosa Tombe attended a two month training at ACPO's women institute in Sutatenza, Boyacá, in 1983. Due to the encouragement of Taita Segundo Tombe, a former Misak governor and an ACPO's alumni, Mama Rosa enrolled in that program an early age, when she was in 7th grade. In Sutatenza, she received training focused on community and adult oriented teaching techniques and agriculture. This experience opened her mind since, according to her testimony, it was the first time she went out from her hometown, learned about other agricultural techniques than the ones employed in her home, met many people from all around the country, and realized the importance of discipline and order for success (IN6, 2015). This experience motivated her to organize a weekend school where 15 Misak women from *La Campana* combined literacy training with the practicing of organic agriculture techniques in the gardens of their houses. The main objective of this class was to teach these women how to read and write their own names. For that historical and social context, full of exclusion and patriarchy, having that knowledge was a significant change in these women's lives. These experiences fostered her in the idea of becoming an educator, thus she decided to move to Popayan to finish her High School in a teaching boarding school.

In 1991, Mama Rosa returned to Guambia and started working at the *San Pedro del Corazon* School, one of the 19th schools organized by the Misak within their territory. After 20 years of work, she received one of the most important national awards

for teachers in Colombia: The National Compartir Award for *Maestra Ilustre* in 2011. Mama Rosa was selected, from a group of more than 500 candidates, for her pedagogy on bilingual education with Misak children. She based her methodology on Misak linguists and intellectuals who argue that education must involve all aspects of the Misak life. For them, education must be focused on the connection between the Misak and their territory, must use pedagogical material related to the context, and must rely on the oral tradition (F Compartir, 2012: 113). In her application for this award, she explains her methodology in this way:

“The methodology I have used is coherent to the model of education Misak and to my conviction bilingual work (...). It is about implementing educational activities both in mother tongue and in Spanish. (...) An example of a comprehensive project is what we call ‘Plants and animals are integral part of the territory’, which seeks to promote the goodness of mother earth” (F Compartir, 2012: 115).³⁴

There is no doubt that pedagogic experiences, such as Mama Rosa Tombe, have contributed to improve the life of Misak youth. As mentioned before, some elders constantly stated that the majority of external school teachers did not allow them to speak in their first language. Consequently, many Misak students felt ashamed of speaking in their native language and many parents opted to teach only Spanish to their kids. As an obvious consequence, the Misak language was dying. This was the way Mama Rosa Tombe found the situation in 2007:

³⁴ La metodología que he utilizado, consecuente con el modelo de educación Misak, acorde con mi convicción de trabajar el bilingüismo (...), consiste en implementar actividades pedagógicas tanto en lengua materna como en español. (...) Un ejemplo de proyecto integral es el que denominamos “Las plantas y los animales parte integral del territorio”, con el cual se pretenden conocer las bondades de la madre tierra

Lucia, the smallest girl in the living room, stands out among his peers for being noble and active. She was (...) the only one expressed in their own language (Namui wam) all the time. Also in that group were Luis Alvaro and Dieguito, who were very “funny”. They mocked Lucia for speaking in her native language. In fact, Alvarito, in addition to mock her, he was also ready “to correct” Lucia when she spoke in Namuiwam Lucia and he told her how she should say it in Spanish:

Lucia: Na Kucha pyro pantriku porwa (I also want to write on the board).

Alvaro and Diego: Ha ha ha! Don't say "Pirpantrik", you should say (in Spanish) "I want to write on the board".

Me: It's correct expression because Lucia is expressing in Namui wam

Lucia: Kuahe (good morning).

Me: Kepam (follow).

Alvaro and Diego: Ha ha ha! Do not say "Kuahe", you should say, "good morning".

Me: it is correct to say “hi” in namui wam

Lucia: Unkua (bye)

Alvaro and Diego: chao

The other children: See you tomorrow.”³⁵ (F Compartir, 2012: 105).

³⁵ “Lucía, la niña más pequeña del salón, resaltaba entre sus compañeros por ser noble y activa. Era muy [...] la única que se expresaba en idioma propio [namui wam] y en todo momento se dirigía a sus compañeritos en lengua. En el grupo también estaban Luis Álvaro y Dieguito, niños muy listos y alegres que a todo le sacaban chiste. La forma de hablar de Lucía los incitaba a burlarse de ella, de hecho, Alvarito además de tener un “muy buen humor”, también era listo y estaba atento a todo lo que sucedía a su alrededor, así que además corregía constantemente las expresiones en namui wam de Lucía y le decía la forma como debía pronunciar en español; por ejemplo:

Lucia: Na Kucha piro pantriku porwa (yo tambien quiero escribir en el tablero).

Álvaro y Diego: ¡Ja, ja, ja! No se dice “pirpantrik”, se dice, “yo quiero escribir en el tablero”.

Yo: Es correcta la expresión de Lucía porque se está expresando en namui wam

Lucía: Kuahe (buenos días).

Yo: Kepam (siga).

Álvaro y Diego: ¡Ja, ja, ja! No se dice “kuahe”, se dice, “buenos días”.

Yo: Es correcto saludar en namui wam

Lucía: Unkua

Álvaro y Diego: Chao

Los demás niños: Hasta mañana.

Eight years later the situation is quite different. The 2011 Compartir award was granted to Mama Rosa Tombe after consultants from that foundation verified Mama Rosa's methodology and effectiveness. The optimum results of her methodology and the methodology of other Misak teachers are evident, not only because of the award, but also because many of the children exposed by the method she contributed to develop are bilingual. I had the opportunity to present the work carried by myself and three students from the Misak University (chapter six) in five educational centers within Guambia – Nucleo Educativo, Peña del Corazon, Campana, Cacique, and Bujios. During our 2-3 hour presentations, the kids of all these schools expressed that they preferred the presentation in their native language, Namtrick, even though all of them speak, read, and write in Spanish as well.

In addition to Mama Rosa Tombe and the others previously discussed, I learned about the cases of many other Misaks who benefited from the work of ACPO. Among them, there are Javier and Felipe Calambas, Eduardo Almendra, Mariano Cuchillo, Jose Antonio Cantero. Javier Morales Almendra, for instance, is one of these many beneficiaries who speak gracefully about his experience at ACPO. He participated in two trainings at ACPO's institute in Sutatenza, Boyacá, when he was 27 years old and he just finished 4th grade of elementary school. At his return, he became ACPO's RS leader for 35 illiterate adult students in his home area, *La Campana*, while he was finishing high school in an adult and fast track program in the municipality of Silvia. Later on, Taita Javier Morales was transferred by ACPO to different municipalities in the regions of Antioquia and Risaralda. He worked there for more than one year and

returned to Guambia to continue working within his community. Once back, he founded the Association of Music from the Andes, ASMUANDES, which continues providing musical and dancing training at the Misak area of *La Campana* (IN7, 2015).

Conclusions

Through the analysis and discussion of various letters, documents, and many interviews, this chapter shows the complexities and some of the results of the work of ACPO's Radio Sutatenza with the Misak and the Nasa communities in Cauca – the first program that sought the modernization these indigenous populations through radio. From 1960s to 1980s, ACPO's Radio Schools became one of the few alternatives that the Misak and the Nasas had to access formal education. As many of this type of modernist programs, ACPO promoted ideas that resulted in extraordinary positive outcomes, but also some that negatively effects for these indigenous communities.

In relation to the positive outcomes, as the testimony of the Misak people Taita Javier Calambas, the collected information by the *Catedra Nasa*, and the data from the letters found at the ACPO's archives show, ACPO provided basic educational tools, on literacy and mathematics, for many of the people who became the leaders of the indigenous movement that fought for recognition and political inclusion. This movement, as discussed in the introduction of this dissertation, achieved the Constitutional recognition in 1991 of Colombia as a multi-ethnic and pluri-cultural nation. This opened the door for the political inclusion of the indigenous organizations discussed in Chapter 5.

In individual terms, ACPO also represented a tool for empowerment to many indigenous people who later became public servants within their communities. This is the case of Mama Rosa Tombe, who thanks to the educational and social opportunities provided by ACPO, became inspired and ended working in a very important bilingual educational program that has benefited many at the Misak community.

In addition to these personal histories, this chapter also shows that ACPO provided educational tools for the improvement of many Misaks and Nasas at moments when the members of these indigenous communities endured high levels of poverty and exclusion. ACPO technicians introduced modernist methodologies for housing improvement, such as running water and modern stoves, and agriculture, such as irrigation and the use of fertilizing.

Despite these significant contributions, ACPO work had significant negative aspects. Due to its horizontal structure, modernist approach, and missionary spirit, ACPO's staff was not capable to understand the richness of the Misak and Nasa cultures. Their language, their religion practices, and the modes of life were seen not as important epistemic assets, but as impediments for progress and modernization, especially at the beginning of ACPO educational program. Even though the letters show a more sympathetic attitude of ACPO external personal over indigenous cultures over the years, the perception of indigenous traditions as something to change and modernization as the only path lasted until its closure. Due to this approach, ACPO's staff did not realize that many of the cultural and technological indigenous traditions that they wanted to replace,

such as the construction of houses with adobe and bahareque, were more convenient and affordable than the practices that they were promoting.

The problems brought by modernist programs, such as ACPO, to the indigenous communities were especially dramatic in the case of agriculture. Although ACPO's focus changed in its last years and started to promote organic agriculture techniques, many elders state that the damage of the agrochemicals was already done by the 1980s: the land in areas abused with agrochemicals, such as Puente Real, became highly infertile; the harvests have significantly diminished; many farmers started developing skin and lung problems; and many organic and autochthonous seeds disappeared.

Perhaps, one of the most problematic consequences of ACPO's modernist approach was the disempowering of those who were labeled as ignorant and slaves for not knowing how to read and write. Even though those skills are very important, it is also important to remark that not having those skills does not necessarily mean having inferior mental capacities. In the case of indigenous communities, the elders who do not know read and write develop other cognitive capacities that allow them to become important figures for their communities.

Beyond all these contributions and limitations, ACPO work represented one of the few opportunities that indigenous people had to acquire the basic skills to form and consolidate the indigenous movement of Cauca, the pioneer movement of this type in Colombia. As we will see in Chapter 3, radio stations continued to be a fundamental tool for the consolidation of this important and historical political project after the ACPO closure. However, as it is explained in Chapter 5, this political-modernist path

has reached its highest point, making necessary other communicative proposals in order to (re)construct the indigenous epistemes.

Chapter 2

The Rise of Community Radio

From the arrival of ACPO's Radio Sutatenza in Cauca in 1963 to its termination in 1989, the economic, social, and especially political, situation for the indigenous people of Cauca went through an extraordinary transformation. In an interview Victor Daniel Bonilla, one of the *solidarios*³⁶ that have worked for longer with the Misaks and the Nasas, explained to me the high degree of dehumanization indigenous people endured when he started working with them back in the 1960s in various regions of Colombia, including the Cauca:

In 60tas the (Misak) did not relate much with outsiders from their own community. They just related with the people who threw them outside their businesses (at the municipality of Silvia, the closest municipality to Guambia); with some people at the market, with some people from Popayan and Morales, but that's it. Once they started feeling that there were some human equality, they started losing their fear to white people. This was not cultural equality, it was just feeling as humans as others, speaking to others like if they were equality human. That was an abysmal step forward for the Misaks, and they had to do it quickly. And then with the appearance of other colleagues who started to get involved with them, they realized that not every human were their enemies³⁷.

³⁶ A group of non-indigenous people supported and joined the indigenous movement during the 1960s. In 1970, they founded the Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca, CRIC. In the first years of the 1980s, a faction of that group support the creation of an indigenous divergent organization called Autoridades en Marcha, which disagreed with the CRIC leftist rhetoric and sought a more identity-indigenous oriented struggle. Those who stayed with the CRIC were known as *colaboradores*, while the ones who joined Autoridades en Marcha's, such as Victor Daniel Bonilla, were named *solidarios* (Caviedes, 2002).

³⁷ En los 60tas, no existían para ellos (Misak) relaciones más allá que con algunas personas del pueblo, con aquellos que los echaban para afuera (de sus negocios), con la gente del mercado, con alguna gente de Popayán, o de abajo, de Morales, pero ahí; pero la apertura de relaciones humanas que dio al perder el temor al blanco, al comenzarse a sentirse realmente que había una igualdad humana, no era una cuestión civilizatoria, no era igualdad cultural ni nada por el estilo, era humanamente: que yo puedo hablarle, solamente hablarle, no expresarle todo lo que pienso, porque ellos siguen siendo muy discretos, pero si hablarle, eso fue un paso adelante abismal (...) eso lo tuvieron que hacer rápidamente.

Almost two decades later, in the 1980s, the situation for indigenous people was significantly different. Although indigenous people continued enduring harsh political exclusion, racism, and violence from different sectors – the State forces, powerful landowners, and leftist guerrillas –, they also had achieved important organizational steps towards political inclusion. For instance, they progressively recovered their territories by purchasing and retaking part of the land appropriated by nonindigenous landholders.

Indigenous also achieved an important level of local and regional organization: they founded their first regional (CRIC – 1971) and national organizations (ONIC – 1980) and proclaimed important political declarations – i.e. the seven points of the CRIC³⁸ in 1971 and *Manifiesto Guámbiano*³⁹ in 1980. Due to all this, indigenous people started to be recognized as legitimate political actors by the national public opinion and dominant sectors of the nation. The level of political recognition and legitimation was such that, in 1982, the Colombian President, Belisario Betancurt, visited Guambia – the most important Misak's territory – in order to establish a dialogue with the Misak's

Y luego con la aparición de los sectores de compañeros que entramos a colaborar con los movimientos pues se dieron cuenta que los humanos, no todos eran enemigos (My Translation).

³⁸ This document was proclaimed in the meeting at Toribio, where the CRIC was founded. These are the seven points of this document:

1. Recover the land of the resguardos
2. Extend the resguardos
3. Strengthen the cabildos
4. Stop paying terraje
5. Teach the laws about indigenous people and demand their application
6. Defend the history, language and indigenous customs.
7. Train indigenous teachers to educate according to the situation of indigenous peoples and their respective language. (CRIC 1978: 9)

³⁹ The *Manifiesto Guámbiano* (1980) is document where the pueblo Guámbiano (Misak) expresses their uprising for their territorial, cultural, and political rights.

authorities. This visit was, in fact, the first documented time that a Colombian president recognized the legitimacy of an indigenous authority in the history of the nation (Tunubala and Pechene, 2010: 415).

The field of communication studies in Latin-American also went through an important transformative process during those years. From 1940s to 1970s, media for social change, such as ACPO, was strongly influenced by modernists and developmental approaches from Western scholars. These approaches proposed to ease the gruesome Latin American inequalities by persuading people, through mass media, to change their habits and lifestyles. Twenty years later, we could see a blooming of media projects that considered valuable popular culture, community building, inclusion, and grassroots participation.

The main objective of this chapter is to illustrate the historical process that shaped the current conception of community oriented radio stations in Colombia. To fulfil this objective, this chapter discusses some of the principal reasons for the radical transformation of media for social change from a modernist and developmental orientation towards alternative communication. As is further explained through this chapter, the perspectives about alternative radio stations itself also went through a process of transformation during those years: from focusing on mass audiences and promoting structural transformations, to become less defiant and more interested in community-identity building. This chapter discusses the repercussion of these transformation for the specific case of alternative radio.

This discussion is very important to comprehend some of the main points of chapter three, such as the implications of the community orientation of the indigenous radio stations from Cauca and the reasons why those type of projects are widely supported by the State and other international agencies, such as USAID.

From communication for development to alternative communication.

From the 1960s to 1980s, the field of communication in Latin America experienced an extraordinary transformation, from communication for development to the rising of alternative communication. This distinction between communication for development and alternative communication comes from Pulleiro's (2012) work. He considers alternative communication as: "necessarily horizontal and participatory, but not all communication horizontal and participatory can be alternative" (27)⁴⁰ and he adds:

What defines an experience of alternative communication as such is its insertion in a process/project of transformation of the social order (...). It is a fundamental its immersion into a "confrontation with the dominant", which should translate into the structure of the medium, its form of management, type of relationship with the players/recipients, content, forms ownership and financing, etc. (Pulleiro, 2012: 27)⁴¹

⁴⁰ "necesariamente horizontal y participativa, pero no toda comunicación horizontal y participativa puede ser considerada alternativa".

⁴¹ "(l)o que define a una experiencia de comunicación alternativa como tal es su inserción en un proceso/proyecto de transformación del orden social (...). Es en opción fundamental, de enmarcarse en 'una perspectiva de enfrentamiento a lo dominante', la que deberá traducirse en 'la estructura del medio, su forma de gestión, el tipo de relación con los protagonistas/destinatarios, los contenidos, las formas de propiedad y de financiamiento, etc.'"

For Pulleiro, participation is fundamental for alternative communication, but it is not the only required feature. Alternative communication needs to be related to a project that attempts to resist and change dominant dynamics of power within society. For this reason, communication for development, such as ACPO, does not fit in the definition of alternative communication. As we can read in Chapter 1, ACPO and other communication for development programs promoted personal empowerment, but they did not aim for larger structural transformations. This personal empowerment could later promote larger political transformations – as happened with the relationship between ACPO’s trainees and the indigenous movement of Cauca –, but these consequences were unplanned and unintended.

Communication for development as the main paradigm of communication for social change started to lose importance due to three main reasons. The first reason was the failure of several developmental programs that intended to promote development without either touching the structural conditions that caused people’s problems or paying much attention to the specificities of local realities and beliefs (McAnany, 1973: 16). As a result, these programs ended up promoting, in the best cases, temporary relief, but not definite solutions, to the serious economic and social problems endured by millions of people in Latin America.

In the specific case of media and communication, after years of large political and economic investment, researchers and activists had a very difficult time to demonstrate the success of developmental media programs. As a result, according to Curran and Park (2000), some of its initial supporters, such as Schramm and Pool, ended

up criticizing their own developmental and modernist approaches. Their criticism referred to their own initial disregard for the political specificities at each place and their own lack of consideration for the power relations between “developed” and “developing” actors (3-4).

The second reason for the transformation of the communication field was the success of ACPO Radio Sutatenza – one of the most successful cases of developmental media – and the miner’s radio stations in Bolivia – one of the historical alternative communication projects in Latin America. These two projects were considered as pioneers of communication for social change in Latin-America. Their success motivated different actors to emulate the popular orientation of these programs, despite the failure of many communication developmental projects at those years.

In the case of the ACPO, the effectiveness of its developmental approach was “demonstrated” through a series of studies, many of them launched by their own organization (i.e. Amaya, 1959; Havens, 1965; Bailey and Cabrerar, 1980). These self-evaluations, however, were involved in various academic polemics. Musto (1971), Schmelkes (1973), and White (1972), for instance, explain that the success of ACPO was measured with official statistical information on coverage, students enrolled, and material printed and distributed. As we could see in the discussion in Chapter 1, these numbers were impressive, making ACPO work to appeal as highly efficient and successful. In contrast with the availability of official data, these scholars drew attention to the lack of ethnographic work about the impact of ACPO at local level. In any case, ACPO’s good initial reputation motivated scholars and activist to promote radio

broadcasting as an instrument to pursue “social change” among disenfranchised communities, but from more participatory and politically involved perspectives in order to not replicate the problems of other developmental communication proposals.

In relation to the Bolivian miner’s radio stations, they were very important for the alternative media movement because they demonstrated the potential of self-produced media. This communication project was initiated when the Federated Union of Mine Workers of Bolivia (FSTMB) created their own radio stations in order to promote their own candidates for the 1947 parliamentary elections. Throughout this political move, the miners wanted to gain political power by reaching decision taking positions at regional and national levels. These radio stations had the specific mission of denouncing the abuses against the mining workers, forging class consciousness, and disseminating the FSTMB’s political ideas to their associates and others sectors of the society. All this in the midst of a mass media landscape completely controlled by the Bolivian mining barons.

This alternative media project received aggressive attacks from the Bolivian elite. The mass media owners, for instance, constantly denounced and called for the closing of these clandestine radio stations. The State, meanwhile, sized their equipment, imprisoned personnel, and even bombed infrastructure, especially in moments of social uprising. Despite all these attacks, the miners were able to have in operation 25 of these radio stations in different regions of Bolivia by the mid-1970s (Salinas, 2004: 121-128). According to Dagron (2004), these Bolivian miners’ radios became inspirational for the rest of Latin-America due to their uniqueness in various aspects:

1. The miners' radio stations started developing during the late 1940s, at a time when participatory communication was nonexistent.
2. They grew as an impressive network of more than twenty-five stations in only fifteen years, covering the most important economic territory in the country.
3. The Miners themselves funded the stations with part of their wages and assumed full ownership (they were not part of a NGO or State initiative).
4. Presenters and programmers were drawn from the local community, and some became so experienced that they ended up working in major Bolivian networks years later.
5. Women and children from the community often acted as human shields to defend the stations against attacks from the army.
6. The stations largely transcended "local" limits and, in times of political crisis, had national influence (Dagron, 2004: 130).

The case of these radio stations is, in fact, very relevant for the study of indigenous media since many of their Bolivian miner organizers belonged to Quechua and Aymara communities. According to Lozada and Kuncar (2004), the community oriented traditions of these workers was fundamental for organizing communitarian relationships at local and national levels. However, the case of these radio stations is quite different than the community media radio stations from the region of Cauca. On one hand, the Bolivian radio stations had a strong identification with the Marxist inspired labor movement, while, on the other hand, the radio stations from Cauca are based on indigenous identity. This comparison is, in fact, very illustrative because it shows the historical transformation in the conception of alternative radio in the region.

Returning to the causes of the transformation of the communication field in Latin America, the third reason for such change was the new theoretical frameworks that originated in this region. Latin American thinkers started to propose philosophical postulates, such as Dependency Theory and Philosophy of Liberation, which challenged

the traditional reading of Marxism, development, modernity, inequality, and poverty. They were motivated by the failure of developmental programs, the rise of repressive military dictatorships, the general economic crisis in the region, the structural dependency of the region on former colonial powers, and the increasing gap in political, economic, and media power between first and third world countries.

Alternative radio: from broad struggles to community oriented ones

After discussing the principal reasons for the transformation of the dominant paradigm in the communication field from a development to alternative communication, I turn to explain the repercussions of this historical transformation in the specific case of alternative radio stations.

As we could see with the example of ACPO's Radio Sutatenza and the Bolivian miner's radios, media for social change has been around since the 1940s. In addition to these two cases, this tradition is composed by different media approaches and theoretical perspectives. In order to categorize this type of media, specifically in the case of radio broadcasting, Mata (2013) proposes to differentiate between two types of alternative radio stations: popular and community. "Popular radio stations" are projects that focuses on class and social struggles in a global context, while "community radio stations" pays more attention to community building at local level (Mata, 1993: 57-58). This differentiation focuses on the political priorities of each of these categories, making possible that some popular radio stations have also some community scale focus and community radio stations some global projections.

Based on Mata' differentiation, Pulleiro (2012) explains the historical transformation from popular radio – i.e. the Bolivian radio stations – into community oriented radio stations – i.e. the indigenous radio stations of Cauca. Broadly speaking, he identifies three moments that shaped and influence the vision of alternative radio in Latin America. 1. The dictatorship era from 1960s to 1970s; 2. The transition from dictatorship to democratic regimes in the 1980s; and 3. The post-Soviet era from the end of the 1980s to now. These three political events, in turn, shaped three types of alternative radio stations in Latin America – mass oriented popular radio stations, identity oriented radio stations, and community oriented radio stations, according to Pulleiro.

The *mass oriented popular radio stations*, which were strongly influenced by the Bolivian miner's radio stations, were based on:

A model based on the initiative of political or trade union forces with Marxist orientations that trigger their own communication tools, which assigned certain tasks and objectives from understanding society in terms of development of the class struggle and to conceive their own practice within the framework of the theory of the political vanguard, as a theory of collective action⁴² (Pulleiro, 2012: 46).

Here, Pulleiro explains that mass oriented popular radio stations – which, again, coincided with the time of military dictatorship and repression – were used by political groups, especially those inspired by Marxist thought, as tools for developing class

⁴² “(...) un modelo basado en la iniciativa de fuerzas políticas o corrientes sindicales de orientación marxista que ponen en marcha sus propias herramientas de comunicación, a las que le asignan determinadas tareas y objetivos a partir de entender a la sociedad en función del desarrollo de la lucha de clases, y de concebir su propia praxis en los marcos de la teoría de la vanguardia política, en tanto teoría de la acción colectiva”.

struggle and proletarian mobilization. According to Mata (1993), the recognition as popular implies a political-economic and social statement regardless of their ethnic condition and their geographic location. These radios, therefore, were manifestations of organizations that represented the oppressed and excluded in their struggle for social change (Mata, 1992: 59). The political nature of popular radios implies that the mission of these radio stations was not merely the democratization of communication – a discourse that later appeared on scene –, but the alteration and change of unjust economic, social, and political systems. Regarding to this point, Mata states:

In this sense, for popular radios the key is not to improve the communication situation of certain groups of individuals or communities, but to promote popular sectors' - definable in economic and cultural terms – encounters and shares of their realities, needs and interests, as well as publicizing their projects to the whole society ⁴³ (Mata, 1993:56)

The work of the pedagogue Pablo Freire was fundamental for the development of this type of radio stations. His book *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, became the most inspirational text on their seeking for communication spaces that aim to transform the situation of the most vulnerable sectors of the society. In this book, Freire launched a major critique of dominant views on education and mass media, arguing that these two institutions created vertical and uneven relations between actors. This becomes evident with the classical idea that place the teacher's intellectual capacity as superior that the students' one. Freire claimed that the function of this form of education was not to

⁴³ “En este sentido, para las radios populares la clave no está en mejorar la situación comunicacional de ciertos conjuntos de individuos o comunidades, sino de trabajar para los sectores populares – definibles en términos socioeconómicos y culturales – puedan conocer y poner en común sus realidades, necesidades e intereses y logren hacer públicos sus proyectos ante el conjunto de la sociedad”.

liberate, but to domesticate (Freire, 1973: 88) (Beltran: 1979, 168). This form of education is closely linked to the top-down traditional communication theory that claims that any communicative action involves the active (speaker), the passive (listener), and the message. Freire explains that the aim of communication, according to this classical model, was to limit emancipatory action through persuasion (158).

Due to the opening promoted by Second Vatican Council (1962), some progressive voices and ideas reached the traditionally conservative Catholic establishment. Some of these new members became enthusiastic with progressive postulates, such as Freire's, and with the positive results of a developmental radio station called *Emisora Cultural de Canarias, Africa, y America* (ECCA) in the Spanish Canary Islands. This radio station offered training and official accreditations with the aim of helping people from disenfranchised sectors to find better labor opportunities. This model was later implemented by the Catholic Radio Santa Maria from Dominican Republic and, due to its success, it spread to Costa Rica, Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador (Sanchez, 1989: 60).

Motivated by the success of ACPO and ECCA model, 22 Catholic radio institutions – including ACPO and Radio Santa Maria – funded the *Asociacion Latinoamericana de Educacion Radiofonica* (ALER)⁴⁴ in 1972. According to its funding statement, ALER was created to strengthen the work of those radio stations that were working for peace and social justice: “we have the deepest desire of expressing

⁴⁴ Latin-American Educational Radio Association

how our Institutions for Radio Education and ALER response to the permanent and growing ‘Latin American demand’ for justice and peace”⁴⁵ (Sánchez, 1989: 56).

One of the most interesting and well known projects supported by ALER was the Bolivian *Radio Pio XII*. This radio station was initially born as a conservative response to the growth of the miner’s radio stations in the 1950s and 1960s. After a period of harsh dispute between Radio Pio XII and the miner’s radio stations, progressive priests took over Radio Pio XII, changing completely its operations and perspectives. Foreign professional broadcasters and producers were replaced by local personal with experience in popular mobilization, transforming this project into another “miner’s radio station” (Lozada and Kuncar, 2004: 24-30).

According to Pulleiro, after years of growth and expansion, democratic reforms implemented after the falling of the military dictatorships in the 1980s ended with the golden years of popular radio stations. These democratic reforms, however, did not necessarily imply better living conditions for popular classes. While these reforms diminished human rights violations, they also brought a series of neoliberal reforms that eroded the national industrial apparatus and weakened the traditional leftist movement.

These political-economic transformations motivated communication theorists to seek new strategies for resistance that differed from the ones offered by the traditional left, such as popular radio stations. They found Gramsci’s theory of hegemony and resistance, which advocates for changing the revolutionary focus from traditional

⁴⁵ “Tenemos el deseo profundo de expresar como nuestras Instituciones de Educación Radiofónica y ALER, responden en la práctica a ese permanente y creciente ‘clamor latinoamericano’ por la justicia y la paz”.⁴⁵

Marxist dynamics of class struggle to instances of negotiation and resistance based on identity politics (Pulleiro, 2012: 55). One of these theorists was Jesus Martin Barbero, who proposed to turn the focus of media studies, from media production to audience reception, in his book *De los Medios a las Mediaciones* (1987).

De los Medios a las Mediaciones explains the importance, as well as the challenges, of studying the process through which masses appropriated popular culture. Here, Barbero problematizes Frankfurt School's pessimistic view on popular culture. According to him, popular culture is more than just a vehicle for indoctrination due to the capacity of popular classes to appropriate it and use it according to their contexts and needs. This appropriation, in turn, creates the possibilities for resistance and social change. By considering the active role of the audiences, Barbero concludes on the need of investigating communication, not from the standpoint of production, but from media reception – the center of the counter-hegemonic reaction against mass media (Barbero, 1987) (Baca Feldman: 2011).

Barbero's culturist approach had a great impact on the shape of the post-popular alternative radio stations. The recognition of people's agency implied that everyone had the capacity to contribute to forge a better future. According to Pulleiro, this singularity made communication more participatory, but also more specific, fragmented, and identity oriented (2012). This new alternative radio approach tremendously differed from the old top-down popular radio method in which professional broadcasters were in charge of educating audiences. This change became consolidated by the arising of the second paradigm on alternative radio broadcasting: *identity oriented radio stations*.

Radio Eucha, from the municipality of Paez, Cauca, represents one of the first attempts for establishing an identity oriented radio stations in Colombia. Funded by the Catholic Vincentian Missionaries, Radio Eucha – which means “good morning” in the language Nasa Yuwe – became the first radio station that broadcasted programs in an indigenous language in Colombia (394). The establishment of this radio station was very complicated. This radio station could finally broadcast, for first time in 1987, after eight years fighting against the harsh bureaucratic and legal obstacles imposed by the State on this type of projects (Vasquez, 1992: 393). This long delay is remarkable considering, as we will see in the Chapter 3, the current support for community oriented radio stations by the State’s institutions and powerful international aid programs.

Radio Eucha is an illustrative example of the transformation from mass oriented popular radio stations to identity radio stations. This radio station kept some of the characteristic of the old model – founded and controlled by large organizations, in this case the Catholic Church –, but with a local and identity oriented focus. As many projects of this type, Radio Eucha work was targeted by different critical voices. Although reports describes Radio Eucha as as a highly participatory and inclusive project (Rodriguez, 1998: 4-5), there were Nasas who harshly distrusted this project. For instance, Adonias Perdomo, a Nasa leader, pedagogue, and linguist, criticized Radio Eucha for being an instrument of Catholic evangelization.

Despite his skeptical views on Radio Eucha, Perdomo also recognized the cultural and political importance of this radio station for his community. For first time, there was a radio station that broadcast information relevant for the community, local

music, and news in Nasa Yuwe (Alba, 1993). In order to keep having these services without the risk of promoting evangelization, Perdomo called for the establishment of a self-produced Nasa's radio station. This radio station, he believed, would interconnect the Nasas scattered through the Cauca region, diffuse and promote their culture, and strengthen the Nasa political project (Alba, 1993: 67-69). This type of enthusiasm over self-produced radio stations grew during the coming years in the region.

The voices that claimed for the establishment of self-produced and self-controlled radio stations were responsible for the arising of Pulleiro's third phase of alternative radio stations in Latin America – *community radio stations*. These new alternative radio stations focused, as the previous ones, on servicing the most vulnerable sectors of the society. However, there one fundamental difference between community radio stations and the previous case – identity radio stations: the idea of media democratization at production and reception level (Pulleiro, 2012: 73). Based on this idea, indigenous people, for instance, decided to create their own radio stations, without the tutorage of the Catholic Church or any external institution.

The idea of the democratization of media production started to have resonance after the UNICEF launched studies, such as the 1980 MacBride Report. This report diagnosed the problems and proposed possible solutions for the uneven flow of information between affluent and poor areas of the world. These solutions included: the strengthening of independence and self-reliance of third world media, the creation of third world news agencies, the integration of communication into development programs, the strengthening cultural identity in peripheral areas, and the reduction of

the commercialization of communication (UNESCO 1980: 253-268). Even though these recommendations were far of being adopted, the MacBride report started the debate about the need for alternatives to the dominant model of media production. One of these alternatives that came up after years of discussion was precisely the development of community media.

In addition to the McBride report, another issue that contributed to the arising of radio stations with community orientation was the appearance of the new social movements, which were not based on class struggle, but on identity. These identity groups started to see that, as we saw in the case of the Bolivian radio stations, popular radio stations were not completely participatory and democratic since they were controlled by external entities, especially the Catholic Church. One of the most important theoretical consequences of this opening was the arising of the idea of “communication as a right”. For the State and international agencies, such as UNESCO, community radio represented the opportunity to satisfy the communicative demands of traditional excluded communities without affecting the economic interests of large media conglomerates (Pulleiro, 2012: 72).

To sum up, Pulleiro’s three stages of alternative radio stations – mass oriented, identity oriented, and community oriented – provides a very useful theoretical framework to understand the profound changes in the conception of alternative media since 1970s. This field came from popular radio stations attached to political agendas that fought for structural changes in the social order to community radio stations that sought the strengthen of identity groups at local level. For Pulleiro, one of the most

remarkable features of this change was that the concern started to be less what is being saying, and more how and who is saying it ⁴⁶ (Pulleiro, 2012: 72). As shown in Chapter 3, the community radios stations of the Misak and the Nasa people belong to the former group.

Conclusions

This chapter provides an historical review of the origins and evolution in the field of communication for social change, from communication for development to alternative media, and the transformation of the idea of alternative radio itself – from mass oriented, to identity oriented, to finally community radio – from 1960s to 1990s. This historical account provides the ground for understanding the origins and development of the Misak and Nasa community radio in Chapter 3.

This chapter discusses three main reasons that originated the decaying of “communication for development” and the arising of “alternative communication”: 1. The failure and/or limited success of several developmental programs during 1960s and 1970s, which motivated donors to find more participatory and horizontal ways of participation. 2. The success of ACPO and the Bolivian miners’ radio stations that showed – at least on the studies carried at those years – that radio stations could potentially provide the participatory channels needed for social change. 3. The rise of new theoretical tools that located the source of the problems of the poor in large

⁴⁶ “la preocupacion por lo que dice empezara a ser menor respecto al como se dice y quienes lo dicen” (my translation)

structural conditions. Popular radio stations, the first paradigm of alternative radio, started to be seen as instruments to change these structural conditions through fostering consciousness among the oppressed.

As Pulleiro (2012) shows, “alternative radio” has also gone through a very particular evolutionary process in Latin America. The first model, mass oriented popular radio stations, became a very important instrument for working class struggle against the structural disadvantage of the economic system and the violence performed by the military dictatorships during the 1960s and 1970s. Due to the crisis of the traditional left resulting from the democratization process of the 1980, which included the replacement of repressive military dictatorship, but also a series of economic reforms that accelerated a deindustrialization process, progressive sectors of the society started to seek new strategies for political resistance. Sectors influenced by liberation philosophy promoted identity oriented radio stations, such as Radio Eucha, in order to seek political inclusion of traditional disenfranchised sectors of the society, this time not based on class, but on identity.

In order to move away from the tutelage of the Catholic Church, the communities related to these identity oriented radio stations started to promote their own community oriented radio stations. This paradigm, that inspired the Misak and Nasa radio stations, is supported on the conception of “communication as a right”. After this short review on the historical development of alternative radio, the next chapter turns into the specific case of these community radio stations at indigenous communities in Cauca.

Chapter 3

Public Interest Indigenous Radio Stations in Cauca

This chapter deals with radio projects produced and directed by the Nasas and Misaks. In the Cauca's indigenous territories, there are three types of indigenous radio stations: 1. low power and private owned, which are organized by members of these communities, but are not controlled by the local authorities; 2. the community oriented radio stations, which are administrated by local cabildos and, at least in theory, belong to the entire community; and 3. the evangelical radios, affiliated to one or an association of Christian evangelical churches. In relation to the first case, this dissertation does not deal directly with them, since their power and audience within the studied communities are quite small. This part of the work focuses in the second case – the community oriented radio stations and the following chapter with the case of evangelical radios.

A few years after the ratification of the 1991 Colombian Constitution, which proclaimed the right of communication, there was an explosion of community media projects through that nation. The State and international aid agencies, especially the Agencia Española de Cooperacion para el Desarrollo, AECID, and USAID, were among of the main supporters of these projects. Their idea was that community radio stations would democratize media ownership, promote the local participation, and facilitate dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution, especially in areas with high levels of social conflict. In relation to indigenous people from Cauca, they see radio stations as instruments for strengthening their organizations at political and social level. Although indigenous organizations have received important support for these projects, there is not

much information about the real impact of these radio stations – their contributions, limitations and contradictions. I attempt to contribute to this conversation, especially in relation to the role of these media projects in the process of indigenous inclusion since the 1991 Colombian constitution. This case provides an excellent opportunity to understand the dynamics of political inclusion that touched indigenous people after the 1991 – the starting point of the Colombian multicultural era.

My main point about these community-oriented radio stations is that, although they have played a fundamental role as instruments for political organization and mobilization in times of political and social unrest, denouncing human rights violations, promoting the use of indigenous languages, and forging a new generations of indigenous leaders, these radio stations have also produced new challenges and difficulties for these communities. For instance, they have created new economic obligations for already impoverished communities. They have also fostered and created new dependencies on external donors; undermined more horizontal forms of communication; exacerbated and made more visible power conflicts within these communities, among other effects. These findings contrast with the hyper-optimistic view through which community media is historically analyzed.

This chapter starts with a discussion of the history of community media legislation in Colombia, which initially facilitated the boom of community and identity oriented radio stations, but more recently has limited the power and possibilities of this type of media. Following, the history of the State program *Programa Comunidad*, which was resulted fundamental for the establishment of indigenous radios is presented. As

will be shown, this program had lots of idealized projections, in relation the possibilities for radio networking and the capacity of those radio stations to become spaces of media democratization, that even contradict the rules stipulated by the law and the experiences that indigenous people had with this type of projects.

This legal and historical context provides the grounds to understand the advances and limitations of the *Programa de Comunicación Misak (PCM)*, the place where I carried out more than two years of research. After introducing the case of this indigenous communication program, I discuss seven contributions and thirteen difficulties of this program that I found through interviews and personal experience. This case is contrasted with the case of the Tejido de Comunicación de la ACIN, TC-ACIN, the most well-known of these radio stations, in order to show that the problems endure by the PCM, such as the lack of money, technical problems, and lack of support of the local indigenous authorities, are common in this type of projects.

Colombian Legal Framework and Alternative Radio

Colombia is recognized as one of the pioneers of progressive legislation on community media in Latin America (Rodriguez and El Gazi, 2007). Before the 1990s, this country had a series of restrictions for this type of media, as shown in the case of Radio Eucha (Chapter two). The situation started to change thanks to the 1991 Colombian Constitution, which set up the bases for the creation of different mechanisms of popular participation, such as community oriented radio stations. Article 20 of the

1991 Constitution, which is most important and most cited in relation to communication, states:

The Constitution guarantees everyone the freedom to express and disseminate their thoughts and opinions, to transmit and receive truthful and impartial information and to establish mass media. These are free and have social responsibility. It guarantees the right of correction on equal terms, and no censorship.⁴⁷

In addition to this general statement about the proclaimed right of communication – freedom of expression, the right of being informed, and the right of establishing mass media organizations – the 1991 Constitution also provides some specific rules for the democratization of the electromagnetic spectrum:

Article 75: The electromagnetic spectrum is an inalienable and imprescriptible public asset managed and subjected to state control. Equal opportunities in access to their use are guaranteed. To ensure media pluralism and competition, the State will intervene to prevent monopolistic practices in the use of the electromagnetic spectrum (my translation).⁴⁸

This same year the Colombian government, through the law 21, also ratified the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention No. 196, which is the principal manifesto for the rights of indigenous people in international law. This convention, in its Part Fourth (Education and Media) Article 27 Point third, ordered the signatory

⁴⁷ La Constitución garantiza a toda persona la libertad de expresar y difundir su pensamiento y opiniones, la de informar y recibir información veraz e imparcial y la de fundar medios masivos de comunicación. Estos son libres y tienen responsabilidad social. Se garantiza el derecho a la rectificación en condiciones de equidad, no habrá censura (my translation).

⁴⁸ Artículo 75 superior dispone: El espectro electromagnético es un bien público inajenable e imprescriptible sujeto a la gestión y control del Estado. Se garantiza la igualdad de oportunidades en el acceso a su uso en los términos que fije la Ley. Para garantizar el pluralismo informativo y la competencia, el Estado intervendrá por mandato de la Ley para evitar las prácticas monopolísticas en el uso del espectro electromagnético

countries to recognize the right of indigenous people to have their own media and to support these types of media projects:

Furthermore, governments should recognize the right of indigenous peoples to establish their own educational institutions and facilities, as long as such institutions meet minimum standards established by the competent authority in consultation with these peoples. Appropriate resources to that end shall be provided.⁴⁹

The right of communication was initially recognized by the State months before the 1991 Constitutional proclamation through the Decree 1900 of 1990 which regulated the telecommunication services until the 1991 Constitution was proclaimed. This Decree stated:

Article 3: Telecommunications should be used as tools to promote political, economic and social development of the country, with the aim of raising the level and quality of life of the inhabitants in Colombia. Telecommunications shall be used responsibly to help defending democracy, to promote the participation of Colombians in the life of the nation and ensuring human dignity and other fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution, and to ensure peaceful coexistence.⁵⁰

Article 6: The State guarantees pluralism in broadcasting information and the presentation of opinions as a fundamental individual right. These two are derived from the free access to the use of telecommunications services. In this regard, the Government will promote the national coverage of telecommunications services. And it will seek that populations of lower income, residents of marginal or border urban and rural areas, cultural and ethnic groups in general the weakest or minority sectors of society,

⁴⁹ Además, los gobiernos deberán reconocer el derecho de esos pueblos a crear sus propias instituciones y medios de educación, siempre que tales instituciones satisfagan las normas mínimas establecidas por la autoridad competente en consulta con esos pueblos. Deberán facilitárseles recursos apropiados con tal fin.

⁵⁰ Artículo 3: Las telecomunicaciones deberán ser utilizadas como instrumentos para impulsar el desarrollo político, económico y social del país, con el objeto de elevar el nivel y la calidad de vida de los habitantes en Colombia. Las telecomunicaciones serán utilizadas responsablemente para contribuir a la defensa de la democracia, a la promoción de la participación de los colombianos en la vida de la Nación y la garantía de la dignidad humana y de otros derechos fundamentales consagrados en la Constitución, para asegurar la convivencia pacífica.

access to the use of such services, in order to foster socio-economic development, the expression of their culture and their integration into national life.⁵¹

After proclaiming the idea of communication as a right, the Colombian president, Cesar Gaviria (1990-1994), established the Direction of Social Communication and the Division of Social Development at the Ministry of Communication through the Decree 1901 of 1990. This office has as the mission of “sponsoring community participation in the development and management of communications services, especially in the planning and implementation of programs and projects of social communication at regional and local levels”. In other words, one of the purposes of this division of the Ministry of Communication was the promotion and development communication projects, such as community radio stations. Even though this office disappeared in a later institutional reform, in which the Ministry of Communication became the Ministry of the Technologies of Information and Communication in 2008, the State has continued supporting the development of community media through other institutions, such as the Ministry of Culture.

In the specific case of community radio, the Decree 1446 of 1995 marks the regulation path for the coming years. This Decree established two forms of relation of the State with radio: 1. direct management, or the radio produced directly by the State’s

⁵¹ Artículo 6: El Estado garantiza el pluralismo en la difusión de información y en la presentación de opiniones, como un derecho fundamental de la persona, del cual se deriva el libre acceso al uso de los servicios de telecomunicaciones. En este sentido, el Gobierno Nacional promoverá la cobertura nacional de los servicios de telecomunicaciones y su modernización, y propenderá porque los grupos de población de menores ingresos económicos, los residentes en áreas urbanas y rurales marginales o de frontera, las etnias culturales y en general los sectores más débiles o minoritarios de la sociedad accedan al uso de esta clase de servicios, a fin de propiciar su desarrollo socioeconómico, la expresión de su cultura y su integración a la vida nacional.

through the *Instituto de Radio y Television* and broadcasted through the Radiodifusora Nacional de Colombia. 2. Indirect management, or radio produced and broadcast by other parties. In turn, indirect management is divided into 1. Commercial radio – administrated by private companies; 2. Community Radio – which have the mission of fulfilling the communicative needs of an organized community⁵²; and 3. Radio of public interest – radio orientated to promote culture, education, and civic values to the nation. These radios are guided, according to this decree, by the articles 2⁵³ and 5⁵⁴ of the Law

⁵² According to the article 2 of the Decree 2805 of 2008, an “organized community” is a non profit organization of people or a legal representative that share mutual interests in benefit of local development and community participation (my translation).

⁵³ Artículo 2, ley 74 de 1966: Sin prejuicio de la libertad de información, los servicios de radiodifusión estarán básicamente orientados a difundir la cultura y a afirmar los valores esenciales de la nacionalidad colombiana.

Article 2, Law 74 of 1966: Without prejudice to the freedom of information, broadcasting services are primarily aimed at spreading the culture and affirm the essential values of the Colombian nationality (my translation).

⁵⁴ Artículo 5, ley 74 de 1966: Por los servicios de radiodifusión podrán transmitirse programas culturales, docentes, recreativos, deportivos, informativos y periodísticos.

Se entiende por programas culturales aquellos en que prevalecen manifestaciones artísticas o científicas; docentes, los dedicados a la enseñanza colectiva; recreativos, los destinados al sano esparcimiento espiritual; deportivos, los orientados a informar y comentar sobre los eventos de esta naturaleza; informáticos (radionoticieros), los que consisten en suministrar noticias sin comentarios; periodísticos (radioperiodicos), los que utilizan modalidades de la prensa escrita como editoriales y comentarios de noticias o sucesos, con carácter ético o expositivo.

Los programas periodísticos solo podrán transmitirse por los servicios privados de radiodifusión.

Article 5, Law 74 of 1966: By broadcasting services can be transmitted cultural, educational, and recreational, sports, news and newspaper.

It means those cultural programs that prevailing artistic or scientific events; teachers, devoted to collective teaching; recreational, spiritual those for healthy recreation; sports, oriented to report and comment on events of this nature; computer (radio news), which are to provide news without comment; journalism (radio news), those using modes of editorials and commentaries written as news or events, with ethical or expository press. Journalistic programs shall be transmitted by private broadcasting services (my translation).

74 of 1966 and the Constitutional articles 67⁵⁵ and 70⁵⁶. In 1997, the Decree 348 of 1997

made more explicit the meaning of radio stations of public interest:

B. Broadcasting for Public Interest:

When the programming aims to raise the educational and cultural level of the people of Colombia, and to spread the civic values of the community. For the evaluation of the cultural content of these radio stations, the Articles 2 and 5 of Law 74 of 1966 and 67 and 70 of the National Constitution should be taken into account.

⁵⁵ Artículo 67: La educación es un derecho de la persona y un servicio público que tiene una función social: con ella se busca el acceso al conocimiento, a la ciencia, a la técnica, y a los demás bienes y valores de la cultura. La educación formara al colombiano en el respeto a los derechos humanos, a la paz y a la democracia; y en la práctica del trabajo y la recreación, para el mejoramiento cultural, científico, tecnológico y para la protección del ambiente. El Estado, la sociedad y la familia son responsables de la educación, que será obligatoria entre los cinco y los quince años de edad y que comprenderá como mínimo, un año de preescolar y nueve de educación básica. La educación será gratuita en las instituciones del Estado, sin perjuicio del cobro de derechos académicos a quienes puedan sufragarlos. Corresponde al Estado regular y ejercer la suprema inspección y vigilancia de la educación con el fin de velar por su calidad, por el cumplimiento de sus fines y por la mejor formación moral, intelectual y física de los educandos; garantizar el adecuado cubrimiento del servicio y asegurar a los menores las condiciones necesarias para su acceso y permanencia en el sistema educativo. La Nación y las entidades territoriales participarán en la dirección, financiación y administración de los servicios educativos estatales, en los términos que señalen la Constitución y la ley.

Article 67: Education is a right of the individual and a public service that has a social function: it means access to knowledge, science, technology, and other goods and values culture. Education will form Colombians in the respect for human rights, peace and democracy; and practice of work and recreation, for cultural improvement, scientific, technological and environmental protection. The State, society and family are responsible for education, and it will be mandatory between five and fifteen years of age and shall include at least one year of preschool and nine years of basic education. Education is free in state institutions, but subject to the payment of school fees to those who can afford. The State should perform the final inspection and supervision of education in order to ensure their quality, compliance with its purposes and for the moral, intellectual and physical development of learners; ensure adequate coverage of the service and ensure the necessary conditions for minors to enter and remain in the education system. The Nation and territorial entities will participate in the management, finance and administration of state educational services, in the terms given by the Constitution and the law (my translation).

⁵⁶ Artículo 70: El Estado tiene el deber de promover y fomentar el acceso a la cultura de todos los colombianos en igualdad de oportunidades, por medio de la educación permanente y la enseñanza científica, técnica, artística y profesional en todas las etapas del proceso de creación de la identidad nacional. La cultura en sus diversas manifestaciones es fundamento de la nacionalidad. El Estado reconoce la igualdad y dignidad de todas las que conviven en el país. El Estado promoverá la investigación, la ciencia, el desarrollo y la difusión de los valores culturales de la Nación.

Article 70: The state has the duty to promote and encourage access to culture for all Colombians on equal bases, through professional continuing education and science education, technical, artistic and all stages of building national identity. The culture in its various manifestations is the basis of nationality. The State recognizes the equality and dignity of all who live in the country. The State shall promote research, science, development and dissemination of the cultural values of the nation (my translation).

The Government, through the Ministry of Communications, will support radio stations which, according to its programming, are classified as public interest. Likewise, the Ministry of Communications' the Technical Plan for Broadcasting in Amplitude Modulation (AM), will provide to this Public Interest radio station a frequency with local coverage and daytime operation. Local municipalities would manage them according to the following criteria:

1. Priority will be given to municipalities that do not have radio broadcasting service.
2. To other municipalities, they will be subjected to their compliance with protections against objectionable interference. It would give priority to municipalities with smaller populations and higher rates with unfulfilling basic needs.

The Ministry of Communications will assign these sort of radio stations to the Armed Forces and the National Police, upon a request from such entities. These radio stations cannot be commercialized, but they may receive contributions, sponsorships partnerships and/or sponsorships, according to regulations issued by the Ministry of Communications.

The stations operating the Armed Forces and the National Police will have the following purposes: To raise the educational and cultural level of the people of Colombia, disseminate patriotic and civic values, contribute to the defense of democracy, sovereignty and national unity, and encourage the participation of Colombians in national life and the realization of peace.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ B. Radiodifusión de Interés Público:

Cuando la programación se orienta principalmente a elevar el nivel educativo y cultural de los habitantes del territorio colombiano, y a difundir los valores cívicos de la comunidad. Para la evaluación del contenido cultural de la programación se tendrán en cuenta los lineamientos establecidos en los artículos 2º y 5º de la ley 74 de 1966 y 67 y 70 de la Constitución Política. El Gobierno Nacional, a través del Ministerio de Comunicaciones, apoyará las estaciones de radiodifusión sonora que de acuerdo con su programación sean catalogadas como de interés públicos. Así mismo, el Ministerio de Comunicaciones en el Plan Técnico de Radiodifusión Sonora en Amplitud Modulada (A.M.), atribuirá al servicio de Radiodifusión de Interés Público un canal de cubrimiento local restringido y operación diurna, el cual será asignado a través de licencias a las Alcaldías Municipales para la gestión directa del servicio, de acuerdo con los siguientes criterios:

1. Se dará prelación a los municipios que no cuenten con el servicio de radiodifusión sonora.
2. Se asignará a los demás municipios del país. Sujeto al cumplimiento de las protecciones contra interferencias objetables, dando prelación a los municipios de menor población y con mayores índices de necesidades básicas insatisfechas.

El Ministerio de Comunicaciones podrá asignar a las Fuerzas Armadas o a la Policía Nacional en gestión directa y mediante licencia, previa solicitud de estas entidades. Las emisoras no podrán ser comercializadas, pero podrán recibir aportes, auspicios colaboraciones y/o patrocinios, de acuerdo con la reglamentación que expida el Ministerio de Comunicaciones.

Estas emisoras que operen las Fuerzas Armadas y la Policía Nacional tendrán los siguientes fines: Elevar el nivel educativo y cultural de los habitantes del territorio colombiano, difundir los valores

The radio stations within indigenous territories (indigenous radio stations), along with the radio stations from the *departamentos* (political division of the Colombian territory), the municipalities, the national police, the military forces, the universities, were declared radios of public interest. The reason why the indigenous radio stations are in this category is that the Ministry of Communication (now Ministry of the Technologies of Information and Communication) grants licenses to indigenous *resguardos*, which are considered by the law as national territorial entities.

Public interest is defined in this norm as a service that fulfill the institutional necessity for transmitting information that enrich the culture and promote national values. Interestingly, the regulation – specifically the Article 5 of the law 74 of 1966 –, allows these radio stations to broadcast news, but forbids any type of political commentary or analysis. Critical journalism is only allowed on private commercial media. Based on conversations with former and current members of the State’s institutions, I assume that the law wanted to prevent State institutions would use of this radio stations for intervening in politics. Nevertheless, the norm is very problematic since, for instance, it is a matter of interpretation to say whether or not a something is a subjective political commentary or an objective news report, it is very hard to monitor these radio stations to enforce this prohibition, and it limits the potential of indigenous radios as instruments for political participation.

patrios y cívicos, contribuir a la defensa de la democracia, la soberanía y la unidad nacional, e incentivar la participación de los colombianos en la vida nacional y la realización del derecho a la paz.

In 2008, the Decree 2805 changed, again, the rules of radio broadcasting in Colombia. These articles simplified the function of the public interest radios:

Article 18, b: public interest broadcasting: When programming is oriented to meet the communication needs of the state with citizens and communities, the defense of constitutional rights, the protection of cultural and natural heritage of the nation, to seek the general welfare and improving the quality of life of the population. It shall be non-profit oriented and under the ownership of the state.⁵⁸

Article 60. The goals of the service. Public Interest Broadcasting aims to fulfill the communication needs of the State with citizens and communities. I also aims to contribute to strengthening the cultural and natural heritage of the nation, spreading culture and science and promote the country's productivity, promote civic values, solidarity, security, the exercise of citizenship and democratic culture, preserve plurality, identity and national character, serving as a channel for integration of the Colombian people and the generation better informed and educated society disseminate the values and patriotic symbols, contribute to the defense of sovereignty, democratic institutions and ensuring peace. Therefore, all licenses will be required to adjust their radio programs for the purposes indicated (my translation).⁵⁹

According to these articles of Decree 2805, radio stations of public interest cannot have a profit orientation. They are tools of the State and its institutions to communicate with

⁵⁸Artículo 18, b: Radiodifusión Sonora de interés público: Cuando la programación se orienta, a satisfacer necesidades de comunicación del Estado con los ciudadanos y comunidades, la defensa de los derechos constitucionales, la protección del patrimonio cultural y natural de la nación, a fin de procurar el bienestar general y el mejoramiento de la calidad de vida de la población, sin ánimo de lucro, a cargo y bajo la titularidad del Estado.

⁵⁹ Artículo 60. Fines del servicio. El Servicio de Radiodifusión Sonora de Interés Público tiene como propósito satisfacer necesidades de comunicación del Estado con los ciudadanos y comunidades, en el área geográfica objeto de cubrimiento y tendrá como fines, contribuir al fortalecimiento del patrimonio cultural y natural de la nación, difundir la cultura y la ciencia y fomentar la productividad del país, promover los valores cívicos, la solidaridad, la seguridad, el ejercicio ciudadano y la cultura democrática, preservar la pluralidad, identidad e idiosincrasia nacional, servir de canal para la integración del pueblo colombiano y la generación de una sociedad mejor informada y educada, difundir los valores y símbolos patrios, contribuir a la defensa de la soberanía, de las instituciones democráticas y asegurar la convivencia pacífica. Por tanto, todos los concesionarios tendrán la obligación de ajustar sus programas radiales a los fines indicados.

its citizens and communities in order to promote the defense of constitutional rights, the protection of cultural national patrimony, and the general betterment of the living conditions of Colombian populations. In other words, indigenous radio stations – according to the State’s normativity – are communication instruments of the *cabildo* to promote participation, culture, and dialogue within their communities. Obviously, these norms restrict critical political participation and the agency of the participants.

In regard to sustainability of public interest radio stations, the Decree 2805 established that:

Article 25: Sponsorship and public interest radios. They cannot broadcast advertisements, except mentioning sponsorships in return to the contribution in money or other resources. This recognition cannot be longer than five (5) minutes per hour of programming. Those public institutions applying for these radio licenses must ensure technical, administrative and financial sustainability.⁶⁰

⁶¹ Article 62. Sources for financing and reinvestment of resources. Public interest radio stations should invest the resources received for partnerships and sponsorships entirely in the operational costs of the radio stations. The sponsors should be legally recognized as national or international legitimate organizations, or should be the national government.

⁶⁰ Artículo 25: Patrocinios emisoras de interés público. Por los servicios de radiodifusión sonora prestados en gestión directa no se podrá transmitir pauta comercial, salvo los patrocinios entendidos como el reconocimiento, sin lema o agregado alguno, a la contribución en dinero u otros recursos en favor de las emisoras de interés público que se efectúen para la transmisión de un programa específico y sobre el cual podrá hacerse un reconocimiento no superior a cinco (5) minutos por hora de programación del programa beneficiado. La institución pública que solicite la licencia para una emisora de interés público debe garantizar su sostenibilidad técnica, de contenido, administrativa y financiera.

⁶¹ Artículo 62. Fuentes de financiamiento y reinversión de recursos. Los concesionarios del Servicio de Radiodifusión Sonora de Interés Público deberán invertir en la prestación del servicio, en su integridad, los recursos que obtenga la emisora por concepto de las colaboraciones, auspicios, patrocinios y apoyos financieros de organizaciones legalmente reconocidas en Colombia u organismos internacionales o gubernamentales nacionales, independientemente de los recursos presupuestales que le asignen. Dichos recursos deberán invertirse en el adecuado funcionamiento de la emisora, mejoramiento de equipos y de la programación que se transmita a través de ella y en general, en inversiones que garanticen la adecuada continuidad en la prestación del servicio y el desarrollo de los objetivos de interés general.

These resources must be invested in the proper functioning of the station, upgrading equipment and programming that is transmitted through it and overall investment to ensure adequate continuity of service delivery (my translation).

The state rules that all public institutions that request a license must guarantee its economic technical, and administrative sustainability with their own resources, or with the sponsorship of national and international organizations. Advertisement is completely forbidden, but there are possibilities of stating recognitions to those institutions that support those radio stations. This recognition, however, is limited to five minutes for each hour of broadcasting.

These rules have brought different consequences. First, indigenous radio stations are forced to infringe the restriction on advertising in order to guarantee some highly needed income. Though such fines are rarely imposed, this practice puts these radio stations at risk to get fines that would diminish the already slim budgets of these radio stations. Second, and perhaps more problematic, the fact that these radio stations do not get penalized for these infractions unveil the weakness of the State institutions, damaging the already low legitimacy and credibility of the State among citizens. Third, this law put all the financial and administrative responsibilities related to these radio stations on the shoulders of the already busy and indebted indigenous authorities. And fourth, the law does not even consider the any type of salary or economic compensation of those who work in these radio stations. In fact, in the case of indigenous radio stations, it was assumed that the participants would be volunteers, which obviously has consequences for the stability of these radio stations, the quality of their media productions, and the living standards of those who participate in these radio projects.

The question at this point is: has it paid off for indigenous authorities and indigenous communities to assume all these financial and administrative burdens? Have these radio stations significantly contributed to the cultural strengthening of indigenous cultures? Are they spaces for democratic participation and community deliberation? My analysis of the history of the indigenous radio stations in Cauca attempts to contribute to answer those questions.

In relation to the broadcasting program schedule, the Decree 2085 states:

Article 30. Programming of public interest radio stations. These radio stations can broadcast recreational and sport events in which the community participates, and academic and cultural programs of social interest.

They can also broadcast informative programs that are directly related to the purpose of service, in order to extol the respect for citizens' rights.

Paragraph 1. These radio stations cannot broadcast any proselytizing program, advertising or political propaganda.

Paragraph 2nd. Airtime cannot be rented.⁶²

Here, the law ratifies the mission of these radio station as vehicles that foster respect for public institutions and promote citizen's rights. Also, it adds to the previously discussed restriction on private advertisement, the prohibition of broadcasting any type of political and electoral propaganda, or selling airtime to third parties. Again, these two restrictions are frequently violated. Indigenous radio stations promote indigenous candidates for

⁶²Artículo 30. Programación emisoras de interés público. A través de las estaciones de radiodifusión sonora de interés público podrán transmitirse eventos recreativos y deportivos en los que participe la comunidad y programas culturales y académicos de interés social.

Igualmente, podrán transmitirse programas de carácter informativo que estén directamente relacionados con los fines del servicio, con el fin de exaltar el respeto por lo público y los derechos ciudadanos.

Parágrafo 1°. A través del Servicio de Radiodifusión Sonora de Interés Público, no podrá transmitirse ningún tipo de programa con fines proselitistas, emitir publicidad o propaganda comercial ni política.

Parágrafo 2°. Los concesionarios de emisoras de interés público no podrán arrendar los espacios.

electoral positions and they also sell airtime spaces to third parties. This is not because they want to infringe the norm, but because the radio station's operative costs, which includes the use of the electromagnetic spectrum, electricity, maintenance, equipment, transportation, and salaries, is very high. This situation, in practice, contradicts the initial mission of these radio stations as vehicles for promoting respect for public institutions, as mentioned before.

In relation to language, the Decree 2805 establishes:

Article 33. Language. Spanish is the official language of Colombia. The languages and dialects of ethnic groups are also official in their territories. For the promotion and respect of cultural diversity, public interest radio stations can broadcast programs in indigenous dialects or native languages, as long as the purpose and thereby public service objectives are achieved.

Paragraph 1. The entire programming cannot be transmitted or broadcast in languages other than Spanish.⁶³

This article ratifies the Constitutional recognition of the indigenous languages as official within indigenous territories. For this reason, the indigenous radio stations can broadcast in their own language. However, not all programming can be in indigenous languages since Spanish is still considered as the national official language. Despite this prohibition, some of these radio stations have enormously contributed to the promotion of indigenous languages. In the case of the Misak radio station, *Namuy Wam*, the

⁶³Artículo 33. *Idioma*. El castellano es el idioma oficial de Colombia. Las lenguas y dialectos de los grupos étnicos son también oficiales en sus territorios.

Para la promoción y respeto de la diversidad cultural, las transmisiones de radiodifusión sonora también pueden transmitirse en dialectos indígenas o lenguas nativas.

La programación que se realice a través de las estaciones de radiodifusión sonora también podrá ser transmitida o retransmitida en idiomas distintos al castellano, siempre y cuando con ello se logre la finalidad y objetivos del servicio público.

Parágrafo. La totalidad de la programación no podrá ser transmitida o retransmitida en idiomas distintos al castellano.

majority of their programming is the Misak language, Nam Trick, but this practice is not the rule. As an internal evaluation carried by the ONIC shows, many of these radio stations did not broadcast in community's native languages. In addition, the use of indigenous languages in public interest radio stations has also created frictions and controversies. Different communities have denounced that the military and police radio stations, which are also licensed as public interest radio stations, use of indigenous languages to promote the recruitment and involve indigenous populations in the armed conflict ideology (PRTSE, 2014).

According to this Decree, the public interest indigenous radio stations are part of a subgroup denominated as *territorial radio stations*:

Article 60: Territorial Stations are responsible to meet the people's communication needs; to preserve plurality, identity, culture and idiosyncrasy; to boost mechanisms for citizen participation, boost development plans; the country's productivity and promoting regional and local progress. This service is provided through local agencies of the provincial, municipal or district order.

Territorial stations should guide their operation with the following criteria:

- Radio programming should be accorded with the guidelines of the plans of regional and municipal development.
- They have to have associative processes with public entities at the national and municipal levels of geographic coverage area, to guarantee their participation and strengthen their public nature.
- Radio stations have to encourage citizen participation in public decisions, through strategic alliances with municipal associations and civil society.

In indigenous territories, the public interest service would be granted to a legally recognized authority.

For purposes of the coverage area, the license grantee should understand the delimitation of the territorial division of the indigenous territorial entity.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Artículo 60: Emisoras Territoriales tienen a su cargo la radiodifusión Estatal con el objeto, entre otros, de satisfacer necesidades de comunicación de interés de la población en el área geográfica objeto de cubrimiento, de preservar la pluralidad, identidad, cultura e idiosincrasia, de dinamizar los

Again, here the law restates the function of these radio stations as a vehicle to preserve identity and culture, and to foster people's participation at local level. It adds that they have as a mission supporting the development and productivity of the country. In relation to the specific case of indigenous radio stations, the law establishes that licenses would be given to indigenous authorities recognized by the law. It also stipulates that the radio stations' coverage should be limited to the indigenous territory.

One of the most controversial rules imposed over the radios stations of public interest is the prohibition on chain broadcasting (Article 54). This prohibition is very problematic since it limits the potential of these radio stations. In fact, one of the initial recommendations of indigenous people, academics, and members of the State institutions was to create radio station networks in order to expand their possibilities in terms of coverage and political and cultural relevance (RPI, 2000: 71).

mecanismos de participación ciudadana, de impulsar los planes de desarrollo, la productividad del país y, fomentar el progreso regional y local. Este servicio se prestará a través de entidades territoriales del orden departamental, municipal o distrital.

Las emisoras territoriales deberán orientar su operación con los siguientes criterios:

- Diseñar la programación radial acorde con los lineamientos de los planes de desarrollo regional y municipal.
- Adelantar procesos asociativos con entidades públicas del orden nacional y municipal del área geográfica de cubrimiento, para garantizar su participación y fortalecer la naturaleza pública de la emisora.
- Estimular la participación ciudadana en las decisiones públicas, mediante alianzas estratégicas con asociaciones de municipios y la sociedad civil.

En los territorios o pueblos indígenas, el Servicio de Radiodifusión Sonora de interés público de las Emisoras Territoriales se otorgará a las diferentes comunidades indígenas con personería jurídica debidamente reconocida.

Para efectos del área de cubrimiento, se deberá entender la delimitación de la división territorial departamental o de la entidad territorial indígena.

Indigenous radio stations are also regulated, promoted and protected by other various laws. For instance, Law 335 of 1996, which creates private television in Colombia, in its article 20, paragraph 2 states:

The State guarantees permanent access to ethnic groups to the electromagnetic spectrum, other telecommunications services, and the mass media owned by the state. It also guarantees their right of creating their own media in its various forms, and the realization of the developmental plans for ethnic groups, with equality, recognition of positive differentiation, equal opportunities and distributive justice. All these according to community's laws in order to ensure their ethnic, cultural rights and integral development.

The Ministry of Communications and the National Television Commission SHOULD issue the legal mechanisms necessary for this purpose according to the laws of ethnic groups after one month that this law is approved.⁶⁵

The law 332 of 1996, in this paragraph, states that the State should guarantee access to the different ethnic groups to the electromagnetic spectrum– including indigenous people. These ethnic groups, however, should pay for accessing to the electromagnetic spectrum. Indigenous communicators have contested this law for several years. They claim that they have the right to have access to the electromagnetic spectrum, not only supported by this law, but also with the argument of territorial autonomy.

⁶⁵ El Estado garantizará a los grupos étnicos el acceso permanente el uso del Espectro Electromagnético y a los servicios públicos de Telecomunicaciones y medios Masivos de Comunicación del Estado, la creación de sus propios medios de comunicación en sus diferentes modalidades y la realización del Plan de Desarrollo para los grupos étnicos, con criterio de equidad, reconocimiento de la diferenciación positiva, la igualdad de oportunidades y justicia distributiva acorde a la Legislación de las Comunidades, con el objeto de garantizar sus derechos étnicos, culturales y su desarrollo integral. Ordénese al Ministerio de Comunicaciones y la Comisión Nacional de Televisión que a partir de un mes de sancionada la ley, expidan de manera especial los mecanismos legales necesarios para tal efecto acorde a las leyes de los grupos étnicos.

The Law 335 of 1996, as explained before, also creates private television. The mandate of supporting ethnic media is then an attempt to equilibrate the power imbalances between powerful private companies and traditionally excluded ethnic populations. As we will see in more depth in the analysis of the Misak and Nasa radio stations, that idea is quite naïve since these radio stations have local projections and they do not have the capacity to compete at any level with the powerful Colombian media conglomerates. For these two reasons – the denial of free use of the electromagnetic spectrum and the support for the creation of self-produced media –, this law provides a very poor solution to resolve the structural problem of inequality of media access, which became even more prominent since the appearance of private television channels in 1998. The Decree 1161 of 2010 is the current normativity on radio stations of public interest. This decree consolidates all the rules and regulations that we have already summarized.

In addition to this national normativity and the ITO 169 Convention, the 2007 Declaration of the United Nations on Indigenous Peoples, in its article 16, also stands for the rights of indigenous communities to have their own media, to have access to mass media reception (Article 16, 1), and to create mechanism for diffusing correctly indigenous cultures and assuring their fair media representation (Article 16, 2).⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Artículo 16 1. Los pueblos indígenas tienen derecho a establecer sus propios medios de información en sus propios idiomas y a acceder a todos los demás medios de información no indígenas sin discriminación. 2. Los Estados adoptarán medidas eficaces para asegurar que los medios de información públicos reflejen debidamente la diversidad cultural indígena. Los Estados, sin perjuicio de la obligación de asegurar plenamente la libertad de expresión, deberán alentar a los medios de información privados a reflejar debidamente la diversidad cultural indígena.

Article 16 1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish their own media in their own languages and to access all forms of non-indigenous media without discrimination. 2. States shall take effective measures to ensure that public media duly reflect indigenous cultural diversity. States, without prejudice

As we have seen, the legislation that supports indigenous radio is quite extensive, but it is also very rhetorical. It presents community radio stations as the solution to a series of structural problems that affect disenfranchised communities, such as the traditional exclusion from media production and the lack of access to spaces for political deliberation. It also deems this type of radio stations as instruments that would contribute to various cultural aspects of these communities, such as the strengthening of their languages. However, this legislation, at the same time, creates a series of restrictions that limits the action of these radio stations in relation to sponsorships, networking, coverage, and language use.

Following, I discuss the development of *Programa Comunidad*, the State and international aid program that supported the establishment of more than 25 indigenous radio programs through Colombia. This historical recount seeks to illustrate the contribution of those external entities, the motivations of such support, and the commitments acquired by indigenous authorities in relation to the development of community radio stations at the indigenous communities in Colombia.

Programa Comunidad – Señal de Cultura y Diversidad

To approach the specific case of the Misak and Nasa radio stations, it is very important to start the discussion by introducing the *Programa Comunidad* (PC). This ambitious State program provided the economic resources and promoted legal

to ensuring full freedom of expression, should encourage privately owned media to adequately reflect indigenous cultural diversity (my translation).

frameworks to establish the first indigenous public service radio stations in Colombia, including the Nasa's and Misak's.

As part of the social programs of the US sponsored Plan Colombia⁶⁷, the Ministries of Communication – now Ministry of Information Technologies – and Culture launched PC in 2000. This program provided indigenous communities with the necessary infrastructure to produce and broadcast radio, including the initial maintenance of these radio stations and the training of indigenous radio producers. Taking advantage of the status of the indigenous cabildos as public institutions, these radio stations were licensed, not as community radios, but as *radios de interes publico*. This program, however, also supported two radio stations – Nasa Estereo and Voces de Nuestra tierra – despite their community radio licenses.

Indigenous authorities had to fulfill some conditions in order to qualify for this program. They needed to provide the radio station location and a terrain for transmission tower, both with connection to electric power. From 2002 to 2006, 25 radio stations and one center of production were installed. These projects were projected to benefit more than five hundred thousand indigenous people. This represents more than 82 percent of the Colombian indigenous population (Redial).

⁶⁷ Plan Colombia was a controversial US sponsored program that aimed to combat and eradicate drug production in this nation. Although Plan Colombia focused on military actions within areas largely controlled by the leftist FARC guerrillas, it also had a small investment for social projects (less than 20 percent), such as *Programa Comunidad*. The military, as well as the social part of these program was highly criticized for many who considered as another imperialist attempt to strength US dominance in the region. Since 2000 to 2006, this program spend more than 5 billion dollars, making Colombia one of the largest receivers of US aid in the region (Veillette, 2005)

The PC was initially presented at the International Summit of Indigenous Radio of America, organized by the Ministries of Communication and Culture at the town of Villa de Leyva, in May 2000. Two members of Guambia Estereo were among the panelists invited to discuss radio experiences in Colombia – Floro Alberto Tunubala (former senator of Colombia and three times governor of the Cabildo de Guambia) and Jeremias Tunubala (coordinator of the Misak Communication Program, and later governor and vice-governor of the Cabildo de Guambia).

In the opening statement, the Ministry of Culture, Juan Luis Mejia, expressed some of the motivations of the State’s institutions behind this project:

When the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Communications began to contemplate the idea of providing radio stations to indigenous people in order to enable them to express themselves in their own languages, we feel a great satisfaction. We comply with the mandate of the Constitution to ensure the cultural rights of the citizens, the protection of diversity, and we gave answer to the wishes of many communities requesting access to radio as a medium of self-expression and self-determination⁶⁸ (RPI, 2000: 20).

Mr. Mejia’s words fits well with Pulleiro’s theorization on community radio (Chapter two): these radio stations are instruments to promote the democratic participation of historically excluded identity groups, who have been always endured denial of their rights, including the right of communication. More specifically, three general objectives of this program were proclaimed:

⁶⁸ Cuando el Ministerio de Cultura y el Ministerio de Comunicaciones comenzamos a contemplar la idea de proveer a los pueblos autóctonos del país frecuencias radiofónicas y emisoras que les permitieran expresarse en sus propias lenguas, sentimos una gran satisfacción. Cumplimos con el mandato de la Constitución de garantizar los derechos culturales de los colombianos y proteger su diversidad y dábamos respuesta a los anhelos de muchas comunidades, que solicitaban el acceso a la radio como medio de autoexpresión y autodeterminación.

1. Supporting the country's indigenous peoples in the development of communication strategies by providing broadcasting infrastructure and processes of intercultural training for structuring and self-sustaining radio stations that fit indigenous needs and shape their cultural systems.
2. Promoting the dissemination of values and cultural processes among indigenous peoples.
3. Providing internal communication to indigenous peoples by providing training in radio production and supplying infrastructure for each community radio broadcasting. All these with the idea of supporting these communities' Planes de Vida (Redial).⁶⁹

These three different points, however, do not differ much from one another, showing some sort of lack of clarity and political ambition by the *Programa Comunidad*. However, this declaration represents a significant step towards the (re)construction of the dignity of indigenous people. For instance, they manifested the indigenous people right to broadcast their languages on the airwaves and they provided access to a potential instrument for community building, organization, and mobilization.

What is also clear is that this program did not have the intention to touch any large structural problem endured by indigenous people related to the powerful Colombian mass media. This, therefore, made very misleading, exaggerated and hyper-optimistic Mr. Mejia's claim that this project shows the State's openness for the construction of a more inclusive nation towards all cultures:

This new country of the radio has to be inclusive for all Colombian peoples and all cultures (...) lets make this new country to sound,

⁶⁹ 1. Apoyar a los pueblos indígenas del país en el desarrollo de estrategias de comunicación, mediante la provisión de infraestructura de radiodifusión sonora y procesos de formación intercultural para la estructuración y sostenimiento autónomo de las mismas, en forma adecuada a sus necesidades y a sus sistemas culturales.
 2. Fomentar la difusión de valores y procesos culturales propios entre los pueblos indígenas.
 3. Facilitar a los pueblos indígenas la comunicación interna en sus territorios, apoyar sus planes de vida, dar capacitación en la producción de radio y suministrar la infraestructura de radiodifusión sonora para cada comunidad.

embrace, and become one. We need to enter into dialogue and we can imagine all the colors of the Colombian nation⁷⁰ (RPI: 2000, 20).

The participatory process of development, adjudication, and installation of these radio stations is also worth to be recognized. In addition to organizing the Villa de Leyva summit, there were various meetings between representatives of indigenous organizations and the State, and presentations within indigenous communities. In the end, these radio stations were granted to communities committed to the project: they had to request it, provide physical places for all infrastructure, and assume the costs of the station's operations – electricity and the use of the electromagnetic spectrum bills, the maintenance of equipment and installations. This consultation process is important because it shows that indigenous authorities knew the responsibility implied around these radio stations. The subsequent problems around these radio station projects – debts, internal conflicts, etc. – are not only consequences of the action of the State, but also the mismanagement and lack of political clarity of the indigenous authorities and institutions. Envisioning these problems, some communities preferred to not assume such commitments and rejected these public interest radio stations. As a result, the *Programa Comunidad* ended up supporting 26 projects out from the 61 initially projected (RPI: 2002: 7).

⁷⁰ “Ese nuevo país de la radio tiene que ser inclusiva de todos los pueblos y de todas las culturas colombianas (...) [q]ue suenen esos nuevos países y se comuniquen, se abracen, se confundan, y se vuelvan uno solo, con esos ríos. Que entren en dialogo y que por ellos podamos imaginar todos los colores de la nación colombiana”.

For this program, the Ministry of Communication committed to spend 5 thousand million pesos⁷¹; approximately 80 million⁷² per radio station. In addition, it was in charge of carrying out technical studies and assigning frequencies; defining the technical requirements for those radio stations; maintaining the radio stations' equipment during the first five years; and constructing the regulation for indigenous radios within the law for public interest radio stations. The Ministry of Culture, meanwhile, was in charge of designing strategies related to self-sustainability – workshops, networks, etc. with the idea that they would become self-sustaining in a short time. This ministry had also to track the fulfilment of the program's general objectives, obtain aid from international donors, promote and publicize the program, and design a strategy for a national interconnection between these radio stations. This last point not only has never been fulfilled, but in fact is forbidden by the law.

The indigenous authorities, meanwhile, committed to provide places for the radio stations, the construction of communicational agendas –each group had to redact a *style manual* –, and the operation and the administration of the assigned radio station. They also had to assume the maintenance of the radio stations after the initial five years (RPI, 2002: 28). Ten years after the expiration of those five years, the indigenous authorities continue having problems for the lack of resources, not just for the maintenance, but also to afford all the high operational expenses of these radio stations.

⁷¹ two million and 34 thousand dollars at May 2000

⁷² 37,580 dollars at May 2000

The memories of the Villa de Leyva event shows that functionaries of the State, as well as indigenous people and academics, were cheerful about the benefits of self-produced radio stations for indigenous communities. People agreed that these radio stations would become a very affordable instrument for establishing an intercultural communication between indigenous and the rest of the country (RPI, 2000: 36 and 37), counteracting the dominance and exclusion of mass media (68, 84), strengthening the communities' developmental plans (Planes de Vida), and recovering indigenous oral traditions and indigenous languages (75, 78). Some possible difficulties were also exposed. For instance, there were warnings about the possible reprisals from armed illegal groups against indigenous communicators (82), the use of the radio station for individualistic political proposes (84), the use of radio station as a vehicle for acculturation (83), and the lack of resources (121).

There are some issues worth to empathize in relation to the discussion on the pros and cons of such project. For instance, indigenous radio stations were generally seen as possible instruments to restore indigenous cultures. However, indigenous people with experience as radio producers warned that radio had undermined their social traditions. For instance, the Misak Jeremias Tunubala explained that the radio station transformed the work of the community's *alguaciles*⁷³:

This new communication (...) has suddenly changed a bit the role of the authorities, the cabildos and the alguaciles. The alguaciles are zonal authorities. They inform people about the different activities and have direct contact with the community, establishing

⁷³ Alguaciles are an elected position at the Misak cabildo. It is the lowest position at the cabildo, which is generally occupied by more than 100 people, mostly youth men. They have different missions, such as served as a communicative bridge between the authorities and the community, logistic events, aid higher authorities in their tasks, among others.

a family relationship with them back in their area. With the advent of radio, with that imaginary world, the role of authority is lost. Now the alguaciles come to the station to give information ⁷⁴ (RPI, 2000: 105).

This, in other words, means that the radio station replaced a close communication dynamic between authorities and community for a form of communication much more vertical and depersonalized (105). Jeremias Torres, a radio producer from the Arhuaco community, also illustrates some of the problems arose by the introduction of radio broadcasting within his community:

The difficulties we have had in the beginning were mainly related to our cultural traditions. It is very unfortunate that people do not understand the radio thing yet. When we started we were told it was like a death announcement, a harbinger of something bad. Because traditionally when there is noise, when there is nocturnal or diurnal scandal, then its announcement that death is coming. The radio is scandalous, because it makes noise on all sides, and it is announcing the death of our culture. And traditional Mamos said: “we not accept it”. But, some people think one thing and other people think differently. We work with people who want it, until it become widely accepted. Politically, things are never lacking. If one disagrees, arguing that they are the more traditional, we disagree ⁷⁵ (RPI, 2000: 99).

⁷⁴ “Esta nueva comunicación (...) ha hecho que de pronto cambie un poco el papel que tenía antes el cabildo, los alguaciles. Los alguaciles son autoridades zonales veredales. Ellos informan a la gente de las diferentes actividades y al tener contacto directo, establecen una relación muy familiar con la comunidad, allá en su zona, en las veredas. Con la llegada de la radio, con ese mundo imaginario, se pierde ese papel de la autoridad. Ahora los alguaciles vienen a la emisora a dar la información”.

⁷⁵ “Las dificultades que hemos tenido al principio, son principalmente con lo tradicional, la parte cultural tradicional. Es muy lamentable que la gente no entienda esta cosa de la radio todavía. Cuando empezamos nos decían que era como un anuncio de muertes, un presagio de alguna mala cosa. Porque tradicionalmente cuando hay bulla, cuando hay escándalo de animales nocturnos o diurnos, entonces es anuncio de que va haber muerte. La radio, es escandalosa, porque hace bulla por todos los lados, y nos eta anunciando la muerte de nuestra cultura. Y los mamos tradicionales dijeron que: ‘no aceptamos eso’. Pero como nunca falta las partes, una cosa piensa uno, y la otra el otro. Trabajamos con la gente que quería, y se fue posesionando hasta que actualmente ha tenido mucha aceptación. Políticamente, nunca faltan las cosas.” Que alguno no está de acuerdo, argumentando que nosotros somos los más tradicionales y que no estamos de acuerdo.

He explains that the elders of his community opposed radio. They related it to noisiness, which, in turn, is a manifestation of death for Arhuaco culture. Those in charge of the radio project disobeyed the voice of their elders, and worked with younger people who supported their radio initiative. This paradox between radio stations as instruments for conservation versus radio stations as instruments for disruption becomes more evident when Mr. Torres explains that their radio programming does not pursue the development of their community. Their radio programming, according to him, seeks to preserve as “it has always been” their territory and their culture: “Our goal is to survive, not to promote development or the exploitation of natural resources, but to continue protecting our territory and our culture as always has been”⁷⁶ (RPI, 2000: 98).

Another discussion from this event that later became very important is the one related to the costs of radio station operation. The salaries for radio producers were never discussed. This is the only mention to this topic in the entire inform for the Villa de Leyva event:

Economic sustainability refers to the sources, mechanisms and strategies for financing the radio project. While these stations are non -profit, and the resources would probably be reinvested in improving wages, purchasing and replacing equipment, among others; stations cannot lost money”⁷⁷ (RPI, 2000:120).

⁷⁶ “Nuestro objetivo es permanecer, no en forma de desarrollo economico ni hacer explotacion de recursos para vivir mejor, si no nosotros viviremos de esa manera, conservando nuestro territorio y nuestra cultura como siempre ha sido”.

⁷⁷ “La sostenibilidad económica se refiere a las fuentes, mecanismos y estrategias de financiación del proyecto radiofónico. Si bien estas emisoras, al igual que las comunitarias, no tienen ánimo de lucro, y los recursos obtenidos seguramente se reinvierten en mejora de salarios, compra y reposición de equipos, entre otros; las emisoras no pueden tener un ánimo de pérdida”.

Here we see a very general statement about the necessity of making these radio stations self-sustainable. According to one of the members of the Ministry of Culture, who asked to remain anonymous, those who planned this program did not consider the salaries of indigenous media producers based on naïve and misleading ideas about community work within indigenous communities: people would happily volunteer to work without any compensation in return. This has carried a lots of problems for the operation of these radio stations: fostering dissatisfaction, malnutrition and sickness among media producers, which translates into desertion of the most experienced ones, instability of the programs, poor production quality, among other problems.

In addition to PC, indigenous radio stations have received support from other sources in the last fifteen years. For instance, they also participated in a Ministry of Culture program called “Radios Ciudadanas: Espacios para la Democracia.” This program, sponsored by USAID, the Organization International for Migration IOM, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), had as objective “to strengthen local democratic processes through the production and broadcast of radio programs designed to build citizen awareness and increase citizen participation in local governance” (USAID, 2005). From 2004 to 2009, this project spend more than 4 million dollars (2.2 from USAD) supporting community radio stations, including Misak and Nasas, in more than 200 municipalities through the nation.

Have all these investments in money and time have paid off? Have public interest indigenous radio stations contributed to indigenous communities and organizations? How? In 2009, the Ministry of Culture and the National Indigenous

Organization of Colombia, ONIC, tried to answer these questions through a national evaluation of the 25 radio stations and a center of production supported by PC. The methodology of this work consisted in three parts: first, each radio station had to answer an extensive questionnaire about technical and political aspects related to administration, production, and emission. For the second part, a staff composed by anthropologists, indigenous media producers, and members of the indigenous organizations carried out several visits, meetings, workshops and interviews with members of all these radio stations. For the finally part of the evaluation, videos and audios of all this work were produced and analyzed.

The conclusions of that study were somewhat confusing and incomplete. In relation to the questionnaire, on one hand, the study states that the vast majority of these radio stations had endured harsh economic difficulties (73 percent); lack of trained staff (58 percent); and poor technical resources (58 percent) (ONIC, 2009: 33). Half of the indigenous communicators interviewed stated that the political context in their regions – presence of armed groups, administrative corruption, etc. – interfered with their work. 23 percent of the interviewed believed that their main difficulty was the lack of support from the local indigenous authorities and 19 percent complained of weaknesses at indigenous institutions. On the other hand, according to the interviews, 65 percent of the participants consider that their radio stations have the capacity to promote culture and education; 62 percent believe that their work promotes participation and grassroots empowerment; 50 percent were confident in their capacity of resolving technical problems; and 35 percent believed in the effectiveness of their internal organization.

The question is: how can these radio stations promote culture and education, at the same time deal with limited access to resources? In fact, the study also discussed a series of different problems that truly affect radio production. For instance, many of the cabildos were enduring foreclosures due to the administrative debts of their radio stations (ONIC, 2009: 63). The study also states some deficiencies related to the indigenous radio staff: they were trained as commercial radio producers, thus copying traditional commercial radio stations was the rule (24); many of them did not have vast knowledge about their culture, making problematic representations of their own (24); and many of the media producers were volunteers, forcing most the staff to be temporary and part-timers. It is evident that the indigenous media producers inflated the contributions of their radio stations, but they were more realistic in the exposition of their weaknesses. It is not that these radio stations has not contributed to the indigenous communities that they served – forging new leaders, serving as instruments of internal mobilization and external denunciation - , but these radio stations also created new economic obligations, weakened more collective forms of communication, and increased the dependency of these indigenous communities on the State's institutions. This becomes evident in one of the main recommendations of this study: the State needs to assume the maintenance and operative costs of these radio stations (67).

Indigenous Radios in Cauca

My initial encounter with the indigenous radio in Cauca happened in 2009, as part of my MA work on mass media and indigenous people in this region. Two articles fostered my interest on radio stations produced by indigenous people in Cauca:

Rodriguez's and El Gazi's *The Poetics of Indigenous Radio in Colombia* (2007) and Murillo's *Weaving a Communication Quilt in Colombia: Civil Conflict, Indigenous Resistance, and Community Radio in Northern Cauca, Colombia* (2008). Both articles approach the case of indigenous radio very enthusiastically: they see these radio stations as instruments to counteract the exclusion of mass media; to forge solidarity networks against the Neoliberal policies of the Colombian state; to train a new generation of organic leaders within these communities; to shorten distances among indigenous people for political mobilization, among others. More concretely, Rodriguez and El Gazi, for instance, argue that one of the goals of the Misak and the Nasa is "to cultivate indigenous radio production collectives throughout southern Colombia; these collectives will feed the stations with local programming produced from many different viewpoints, thus contributing to the polytonality of Guambiano and Nasa radio stations" (459); while Murillo affirms "Radio Payu'mat has repeatedly shown an unabashed independence from the State and has not hesitated to critique, on many levels, government policy vis-à-vis Indigenous communities and the nation as a whole". After more than 6 years carrying fieldwork in this area – two years continuously – I still share some of their appreciations, but I believe their analysis is deeply uncritical and incomplete. The case of indigenous radio stations is more complex and requires a deeper critical analysis.

Here, my intention is to provide a critical view on indigenous radio stations of Cauca, through the analysis of the Programa de Comunicacion Misak (PCM) and the Tejido de Comunicacion de la ACIN, TC-ACIN – two of the pioneers and most famous

indigenous media intuitions in Colombia. This discussion is based on many interviews, primary and secondary sources, and my extensive fieldwork in the area. I approach this data influenced by Fernet's Betancourt interculturism. This method allow me to understand these indigenous people's as rich human cultures in which all human experience –love, hate, drama, conflict, etc. – are part of daily life.

This part is divided in the following way: first, I will discuss the case of PCM, one of the pioneers of indigenous radio in Colombia and the one that I worked the most with for my fieldwork. I will introduce the history of the radio station, and then I will discuss its difficulties and contributions. Following, I will discuss the case of the TC-ACIN, one of the most successful indigenous radio stations of the continent.

Programa de Comunicación Misak (PCM).

The Misaks started considering the acquisition of a radio station at the end of 1980s. From 1988 to 1992, the Cabildo of Guambia in association with the University of Valle, and the foundations *Colombia Nuestra* and *Hablaescribe*, launched a training program for several Misaks to work at public educational institutions within Misak territories. According to Misael Aranda – an alumnus of this program, a former Guambia governor, and current teacher at one of these schools – this program included exercises and reflection on communication and Misak traditions – the necessity to retake practices, such as family meetings around bonfire, rituals in the community's sacred places, among others. As part of that program, Mr. Aranda and others organized video and audio forums, and a small printing house in order to spread what they learn and support the political goals of the Misaks, such as the campaign for the 1991 Constitutional

assembly headed by the Misak Taita Lorenzo Muelas Hurtado. They also organized an unlicensed small radio station in the Cacique zone – the largest of the 22 zones of Guambia – and installed two speakers in order to transmit self-produced short clips to every corner of the Cacique zone. All these experiences motivated Misak authorities to plan and request a community radio license in the middle of 1990s (Aranda, 2015).

In 1994, the Misak authorities published a manifesto which explained the Misak political, cultural and economic plan for the coming 10 years. In this manifesto, called “Plan de Vida,” the Misak community states their desire to have their own community radio station:

As for the media, the installation of a radio station, in order to speed up the communication around ideas that are needed to be spread among all community members, such as (agricultural) production, organization, marketing, medicine, the Plan de Vida in general, etc. This need to include those who can read and write as well as to those illiterate who only communicate in our native language. It is also important to remember that the indigenous culture is more oral than literate tradition, and therefore, we need to communicate more through orality than through any other medium. Educate, reflect, encourage, support or discern differences, report irregularities, etc. via an irrevocable form of communication: the word ⁷⁸ (DPVPM, 212: 1994).

In 1998, the Cabildo de Guambia opened the *Programa de Comunicacion Misak* (PCM), and this radio station *89.4 Guambia Estereo*, after receiving the radio license during the

⁷⁸En cuanto a los medios de comunicación, la instalación de una emisora o un canal de transmisión, con el fin de agilizar los canales de comunicación alrededor de las ideas de producción, organización, comercialización, medicina básica tradicional y Plan de Vida en general, etc. que se necesitan socializar con la totalidad de comuneros del resguardo. Desde el que maneja las técnicas de lecto-escritura, como el que solo es capaz de comunicarse a otros mediante el uso de su lengua nativa. Es importante recordar además, que los pueblos indios son más de la tradición oral que escrita, y que por consiguiente, necesitan llegar más con la palabra que con ningún otro medio de comunicación. Educar, reflexionar, animar, apoyar o discernir diferencias, denunciar irregularidades, etc. a través de una forma irrevocable de comunicación: la palabra.

previous year. The radio station's licenses fees, equipment and infrastructure were obtained as part of the benefit package from the *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Alternativo* (PNDA or PLANTE). This program, supported by the State and the Agencia Española de Cooperación para el Desarrollo (AECID), aimed to promote the self-eradication of illegal crops, especially coca and poppy. The Misak participation in this program was so successful that it became the main example at the effectiveness of non-repressive programs to deal with drug production in Colombia (RPI, 2001: 104-105; Villaveces, 2002).

For political and technical training, the Department of Social Communication of UniValle carried out a training program called *Comunicación Para la Movilización Social*, which trained 30 Misak young men and women interested in participating in radio production. As a positive outcome of this program, many of these trainees ended up in positions of leadership within the community and beyond years later – I will expand this point later on.

Throughout the years, the Misak started to define more the objectives they were seeking with the embracement of radio. They believed that their radio station would be an instrument to counteract the modernist onslaught from the Colombian mass media through the promotion of the Misak social, political, economic, cultural, and ecological principles:

The acquisition of radio is a strategy to deal with the transformation, change and forgetting of our ancestral memory; to rebuild, to find the features of the past, tune them in the present and disclose in the future. This is because every memory involves a range of time-space: only those who are aware of the time-space can say that remember, so because external factors and influences

our future generations are susceptibility to forget our identity, to leave our identity in a historical discourse and acquire other lifestyles (RHE, 2002).⁷⁹

Here, it is explained that the radio station is a strategy to confront the transformations, changes, and loss of Misak's memory. It will also contribute to reconstructing life according to a better past, synchronize with the present, and disseminate Misak's traditions in the future. In sum, the objective of the radio station was to maintain their cultural roots in order to continue being Misaks in the future.

The projection of the Misak's radio station also coincides with Pulleiro's description of the third wave of alternative radio in Latin America: this project is based on community-identity struggle that seeks to give voice to a historically excluded group. These sort of projects are amply welcome by State, NGOs, and aid agencies since they do not threaten the status quo and they fit with the neoliberal empowerment discourse dominant during this epoch.

The Misak's Communication Program continued growing in the following years thanks to the support of different State and NGOs initiatives, such as the *Programa Comunidad and Radios Ciudadanas* – discussed before. As part of that program, the State granted a license for a new radio frequency to Guambia, this time as a radio of public interest, in 2002. This radio station, named *Namuy Wam* – Our Language – was

⁷⁹ La adquisición de la radio es una estrategia para afrontar la transformación, el cambio y el olvido de nuestra memoria ancestral; para reconstruir, hallar los rasgos de los tiempos pasados (mesrabsro), sintonizarlos en el presente (moy) y divulgar en el futuro (wentosro). Pues toda memoria o recuerdo implica un intervalo de tiempo-espacio: solo aquellas personas que son conscientes del tiempo-espacio pueden decir que recuerdan o sino por influencias de factores externos o el transcurrir del tiempo la generación futura esta acentuada hacia la susceptibilidad de dejar en el olvido nuestra identidad, dejar nuestro pasado en el discurso histórico y adquirir otros estilos de vida.

finally on air in 2009. This same year the Misak decided to cancel their community radio license, due to its high costs and debts related to the use of electromagnetic spectrum, electricity bill, and *Sayco y Acimpro* – a mandatory music copyright tax charged in behalf to artists to radio stations and commercial entities.

Currently, the PCM has had a permanent staff of five people – a coordinator, a program coordinator, a secretary, an audio and video technician, a broadcaster, as well as some eventual temporal volunteers. The primary mission of this staff is to maintain the radio station on air from 4:30 am to 10 pm. The radio station mostly broadcasts talk radio and music, and it eventually broadcasts community events and sponsored programs.

Contributions:

Fostering leadership: It is not exaggerated to state that Namuy Wam is one of the principal schools of Misak leadership. A very important number of those who participated in the initial training organized by the UniValle have occupied positions of authority and leadership within this community and beyond. To name a few, there is the case of Luis Enrique Ullune – secretary of the Misak cabildo twice; Didier Chirimuscay – general secretary of the cabildo and a current journalist for national media; and Jeremias Tunubala, who represents one of the most remarkable of these cases. Taita Jeremias Tunubala, trained in Communication Studies from UniValle, participated in the training provided for the opening of Guambia Estereo in 1997. Later on, he worked in the PCM for several years as radio producer and general coordinator. He has been

invited to several media summits to present the experience of the PCM – including Villa de Leyva’s Encuentro Internacional de Radios Indigenas de America. In 2010, he left the radio station in order to occupy the seat as Misak’s main governor – the youngest in the recorded history of this community at that moment. After his successful year as governor, he became director of the Misak hospital *Mama Dominga* and he later was elected as Vice-Governor in 2014 and reelected in 2015.

Using native languages: One of the most remarkable contributions of Namuy Wam to the Misak culture is the high use of the Misak language – Nam Trick – in their programming. A minimal percentage of Namuy Wam is in Spanish – some sponsorships, shorts translations of important announcements, and programs produced by external actors, the Ministry of Culture, and paid-programs. In fact, one of the principal requirements to work in this radio station is to speak and to read Nam Trick, making the misuse of the language one of the principal complaints of the audience. Despite having access to this resource, these indigenous radio practitioners are careful not to speak openly against armed groups – armed forces, guerillas, and paramilitary – since it is known that they have Nam Trick speakers in these organizations.

It is important to state two points: first, the use of indigenous languages in these public interest radio stations is still weak, as the ONIC’s report discussed before shows. Second, the idea of indigenous radio stations as agents to strengthen indigenous languages needs to be discussed in more depth: we already know that they use the language, but we do not have any idea of how language is being used. Is it used as a tool

to disseminate the Misak's consmovation or does it simply translate western discourses and ideologies – individual empowerment, market oriented relationships, development, etc.?

Women's participation: Each year at least one woman needs to be part of the PCM. This was one of the conditions of UniValle to participate in the Misak communication project. This is remarkable considering that Misak women had been historically excluded from positions outside of the household. Since the 1998, the PCM has had several female workers, such as the former PCM coordinators, Mama Barbara Muelas – the first Misak female Vice-Governor – and Mama Diana Jembuel – current student of Social Communication in University Externado.

Supporting young musicians: The PCM has a small recording studio where local artists can record their music. Even though the quality of recording it is not the best, this is a very productive idea for local musicians since the recording fees are considerably lower than in more sophisticated studios at Popayan and Cali. These Misak artists also receive promotion through the radio station. Interestingly, the majority of these artists request authorization to the authorities to record music when it is related to aspect of the community. This was the case for Sol Nacer's song *Pichimisak*, which is about different aspects of the Misak's myth of origin.

Finding interesting forms of financing: The scarcity of resources has also motivated Misak communicators to find very interesting sources of revenue. For instance, some general coordinators, such as Mama Barbara Muelas and Taita Eduardo Almendra, have included in the PCM's daily tasks working the small plot of land that surrounded the radio station. This work includes, raising cattle and cultivating potato and onion. The radio station is also leasing a small part of this land to the cabildo to grow endemic plants to reforest different areas of the Misak territory. These practices honor Misak's cult to agriculture, also reflected in elders' phrase: "Misak que no trabaje la tierra no es Misak."

Fostering relationships with other indigenous pueblos and social sectors: Thanks to the PCM and its radio station, the Misak has had the opportunity to meet, learn from, and work with countless national and international indigenous groups, activists, universities, public and private institutions, etc. Among of the most important relationships fostered at these radio stations are those with other indigenous groups from the same region. Due to some historical circumstances, it is common that these different indigenous groups saw each other as rivals. For instance, the Misak left the CRIC because of political differences with the Nasa leaders of this organization back in 1980. Regardless their differences, Nasas and Guambianos funded the Indigenous Radio Stations of Cauca Network –AMCIC– in 2006, which gathers and represents all indigenous radio stations in Cauca. In addition to this experience, there are several

opportunities for representatives of different communities of Cauca to meet to work together around the topic of communication.

Instruments for Resistance: One of the contributions for which these indigenous radio stations are most famous is for serving as instruments to resist the traditional exclusion of mass media, the violence of armed groups, the onslaughts of nature, the power of transnational mining corporations, the abuses of the State, etc. In relation to traditional exclusion of mass media, even though the station is far from being able to counteract exclusion and misrepresentation beyond the Guambia territory, the station plays an important role against exclusion among the Misaks. This is evident when elders – especially the ones who were dehumanized for practices, such as the *terraje* system – state how empowering it was when they heard, for first time, Misak voices on the radio.

In relation to armed groups and the onslaughts of nature, Namuy Wam played a very important role in cases when the community needed to act swiftly. For instance, when the guerillas set up temporary shelters and the National Army is transporting troops within and through the Misak territory, the authorities used the radio station to convoke the community and expel them peacefully. This is similar to the case of other types of emergencies, such as landslides and avalanches.

In relation to contesting the power of powerful transnational corporations and the State, Namuy Wam has served as instrument to convoke people and transmit the marches in which the Misak authority has participated, such as the national peasant

strike in 2013. In regard to this point, the case of TC-ACIN is way more recognized, as we will see in the following part.

It is undeniable that Namuy Wam, TC-ACIN, and many other radio stations have played a very important role as a tools for resistance at cultural, political, social, and economic level. However, I argue, these radio stations fall short in contributing to, what Alban (2008) named, “practices of re-existence.” In other words, these communication projects are important tools to resist the power of external agents – when they are well used, for course –, but they have problems contributing, for instance, to reconstruct and explore new epistemic horizons. For this reason, as we will see in chapter six, returning and creating to other forms of communication is vital.

Difficulties:

Debts: Carlos Guillermo Paramo, one of the Ministry of Culture staff who worked in the Programa Comunidad, stated in the Villa de Leyva summit:

Radio has characteristics that make it particularly attractive as a means of communication. It is extremely economical. For a country like Colombia, it can resolve in a very effective way the communication problems involved in its historical process of nation construction (my translation). (RPI, 2002: 35)⁸⁰.

In effect, radio production and reception is cheaper than television. But, in the context of indigenous communities, with very limited budgets and urgent necessities in vital areas, such as health care and education, radio become a very heavy expenditure.

⁸⁰La radio sigue teniendo unas características que la hacen particularmente atractiva como medio de comunicación. Es tremendamente económica. Para un país como Colombia, puede solucionar de una manera muy efectiva los grandes problemas de comunicación que han caracterizado su proceso histórico como nación.

Financial problems became evident few years after the debut on air of Guambia Estereo. In 2007, the Ministry of Communications sued the Cabildo of Guambia for a debt of 6,475.146⁸¹ pesos (4,989.000 debt and 1,489.000 in interests) resulted from the costs of concession rights, extensions, operating license, operating frequencies, and for modifying the technical parameters of the station. In addition, they owed to the State more than 17 million of pesos⁸² for the use of the electromagnetic spectrum.

Debt became even worse in the coming years: they have to pay very high electricity bills – reaching a debt of more than 30 million pesos⁸³ in 2015 –, the salaries for the staff, and the maintenance of the radio station equipment – they had to acquire a new radio transmitter, for more than 15 million⁸⁴ in 2015. Ironically, the high cost of operating these radio stations are product of their legal conditions. Pirate radios do not have to pay license fees, Sayco y Acimpro, nor electric bills as do commercial entities – which is more expensive. The benefits of illegality, one more time, fosters a very dangerous culture of illegality.

Create dependency on external funding: The Programa Comunidad acknowledged the limited economic resources of indigenous people as well as the impossibility of the State to maintain indigenous radio stations. As a solution, the Ministry of Culture proposed to appeal to the good will of international donors (RPI, 2002: 28), fostering a very complicated dependency culture among indigenous

⁸¹ 2,013 dollars of that time.

⁸² More than 5 thousand dollars.

⁸³ More than 9 thousand dollars.

⁸⁴ 4,667 dollars.

communities. In addition to being contradictory with the principle of autonomy trumpeted by indigenous organizations, finding grants demands time, expertise, trained personnel, fosters victimization discourses, and creates competition between these different indigenous radio stations. In 2009, one of the members of the MCP resigned from his/her position because this person considered that the mission of a communicator was to be involved with the community, and not searching for funding. According to this person's resignation letter:

Thanks for the sincerity of the person who categorized me as someone who does not know how to find money for the radio station. He is right, my aspirations, in fact, goes for another path. They are related to our identity and dignity of the Misaks, the defense of our territory, our culture, and the conceptualization of our principles (Letter, 1).⁸⁵

Unfortunately, the proposed solution from some sectors of the indigenous organization to this economic crisis implies more dependency. This is reflected in their proposal exposed at the first forum of indigenous communication in 2009:

We need to build a proposal to decentralize money from the general system of participation for the sustainability of indigenous radio stations, their technicians and indigenous communicators, based on the idea of the right to culture, communication and information.

It became clear that indigenous peoples are not willing to close the indigenous stations. In this sense it is clear that what is happening is the result of a social experiment that requires grants from the State and cancellation of the debts. It is therefore necessary to take into account the annual debts in order to call for a specific annual

⁸⁵ A la persona que me designa como no gestor le agradezco inmensamente la sinceridad. Según poco entender él tiene toda la razón, porque mis aspiraciones es la dignidad identitaria del pueblo Misak y la de otros sectores y la defensa de territorio desde la palabra y la convicción de la cultura, cosmovisión y desde toda la conceptualización de los principios.

grant, without neglecting the needs of coverage expansion, considering that the broadcast must be local (CECI, AMCIC).⁸⁶

Banning Networking: As mentioned before, all actors involved in Programa Comunidad – Ministries, indigenous people, academics – stated that the next step of these initial indigenous radios was to create networks capable to cover the entire indigenous territories. 15 years later, this goal has been impossible to achieve because the prohibitions of the State itself – the Decree 1161, 2010 explicitly forbids this practice. It is also important to remark that the division of communication of the CRIC has attempted to counteract this prohibition by producing a weekly news program with the material sent by the different indigenous radio stations affiliated to AMCIC Network.

Revolving doors: It is very complicated to maintain the same working group for periods longer than one year. In the case of Namuy Wam, I identified three main causes why the staff constantly change. First, every year the new cabildo has the authority to replace the staff. These communicators are people close to the new authorities, which makes their election very political and quite nepotistic. Second, the most charismatic communicators are frequently elected as members of the cabildos; thus they leave the

⁸⁶ Construir una propuesta para descentralizar un rubro de sistema general de participación para la sostenibilidad de las emisoras indígenas, sus equipos técnicos y de los comunicadores indígenas, desde la perspectiva de los derechos a la cultura, la comunicación y la información. Quedo claro que los pueblos indígenas no estamos dispuestos a cerrar las emisoras indígenas. En este sentido queda claro que lo que está pasando es el resultado de un experimento social que requiere una subvención estatal y la inmediata condonación de las deudas de las emisoras. Por ello es necesario tomar en cuenta que los topes de las deudas deben servir de referencia para dicha subvención anual, sin dejar de lado las necesidades de ampliación de cobertura, bajo la consideración de que el ejercicio de las emisoras es local.

radio station for a new authority position, but they rarely come back to the radio station since many of them become later elected to more prestigious positions after serving in the cabildos. Third, some of the most experienced radio producers do not stay longer due to the harsh labor conditions – low payments, bad technical conditions, long shifts, among others.

Out of service: These radio stations constantly go off the air for days and even weeks. In the case of Namuy Wam, I witnessed how the radio station stopped working for all types of problems. The most common reasons are problems with the transmission equipment and the frequent blackouts produced by the poor conditions of electrical infrastructure in the area.

Poor labor conditions: One of the most serious problems related to the scarcity of funding for this radio projects is the poor working conditions of indigenous communicators. In the case of the PCM, I have met very talented radio producers who, after of battling for years to maintain these projects on air, decided to leave for other occupations, such as agriculture, housekeeping, and factory works at Popayan, Cali, and Bogota. Some of those who decided to stay have another source of revenue – a small grocery shop at their house, for example – or they are supported by their relatives. In theory, Namuy Wam's staff receive a salary and a *remesa* (groceries) – mostly rice, beans, pasta, bread and panela (unrefined whole cane sugar) to cook lunches at the radio station. However, the cabildo very frequently delays their payment by months due to

lack of funding. As a consequence, many of them suffer from different health problems, such as gastritis, high blood pressure, and constipation.

Controversial supporters: The scarcity of resources has forced indigenous radio stations to accept controversial advertisers. In the case of Namuy Wam, there is a daily half-hour segment that promotes the health products and medical services from an herbalist called Henry Hernandez. This type of advertising is controversial and contradictory for various reasons. First, these products are overpriced and their quality is unknown since there is not any license requirement for these products in Colombia. Second, these external herbalists are the direct competition for their own traditional indigenous doctors.

Death threats: indigenous communicators are frequent victims of the harassment of armed groups. In 2009, for example, the members of Namuy Wam received a series of death threats from a paramilitary group called *Aguilas Negras*. The situation became even more confusing in 2014, when more than 40 men attempted to kidnap a Nasa indigenous leader in neighboring municipality of Totoro. Members of the Nasa indigenous guard neutralized the kidnapping, by confronting these individuals. They also discovered that these 40 were policemen, but who were carrying out propaganda of that paramilitary group. This situations, of course, affect the work of this indigenous communicators, who opt for self-censorship, even in their own language – knowing that armed groups have collaborators who understand indigenous languages.

Limited self-production: due to the lack of money and experienced personal, Namuy Wam does not have much capacity to produce radio programs beyond talk radio and music since they require resources for editing, fieldwork, time, and research. Radio station coordinators, such as Taita Jose Antonio Trochez and Eduardo Almendra, are fully aware of this problem. This means that cultural productions, which are supposedly one of the main missions of these radio stations, are mainly limited to whatever the radio announcer says.

Lots of commercial music: When the Misak was planning their radio station, they carried a poll to 358 Misaks from different zones. In this poll, they were asked whether or not they listen to radio, the type of radio stations they listen to, the type of programming they want, and the type of music they preferred. In relation to music, only 2 percent of the population chose autochthonous Misak music. During my fieldwork, I witnessed a very interesting blooming of groups of music motivated by the success of Misak bands, such as Sol Nacer and Piurek, and other musical groups, especially from the Totoro indigenous group – Cuatro mas Tres and los Ideales. As we will see in the discussion about evangelical radios, the explosion of new musical groups in Guambia has been possible in part due to the work of evangelical churches, which use the music as a strategy to strengthen their presence in the Misak community.

But, despite this musical explosion, these groups are not much involved in the promotion of traditional music – which is based on drums and flutes. The radio station

has attempted to contribute to the expansion of this traditional music, but this mission has endured different hardships. For instance, the coordinator of the Misak Communication Program in 2015, Taita Eduardo Almendra, attempted to include more traditional music within the daily broadcasting, but they had to lessen the frequency of this transmission because the audience, through their calls and text messages, asked for commercial genres, such as techno-cumbias, vallenatos, and baladas. This does not necessarily mean that the music of drums and flutes is disappearing: this music is present in most of the community events, such as the possession of the new cabildo every year, weddings and funerals. But, this music is always accompanied with very emotional dancing and a colorful performance from the musicians, which is impossible to reproduce through the radio station. Traditional Misak music, perhaps, is not made for radio programming.

Lack of support from authorities and other programs: According to Misak communicators, they do not feel that the authorities take them seriously. In the 2009 Namuy Wam year report, the staff indicated that the authorities and the members of 11 other programs – health, education, infancy, territory, seeds, environment, and justice, among others – do not pay enough attention nor participate in the programming of the radio station:

After 10 years the program has achieved to maintain a technical staff thanks to the cooperation of national and international organizations as well as our traditional authority (the cabildo), but unfortunately the same cabildo and its various programs have been reluctant in the work done daily. They comply with allocate annual resources for operation, but there is not a socio-political

appropriation and they have not understood the true value of the communication. This makes very difficult to ensure compliance with the goals and objectives of the program (PCM, 2009).⁸⁷

As an example of how this affects the radio station, a former coordinator explained to me that she scheduled weekly airtime for all other programs. A few programs initially responded to her call, but few weeks later not even those who responded at the first time showed up at the station.

The Cabildo's Public Relation Agency: Since the cabildo are the direct employers of the radio station practitioners, controversial discussions are rarely touched. For this reason, many of these radio stations ended up being the public relation agents of the authorities in power, a situation that creates a series of tensions with audiences. In Guambia, this situation became evident in 2013, when Namuy Wam's broadcasters were fired after criticizing a land purchase by the Governor of that year, Mama Ascension Velasco. This was far from being just a situation between authorities and rebellious communicators: those fired communicators had a close relationship to another political fraction within the community. The problem between these two sectors did not end there: the fired communicators complained about what they considered excessively aggressive and offensive terms used against them by new radio station staff.

⁸⁷ Después de 10 años el programa de comunicaciones se ha mantenido y conformado su equipo técnico con la cooperación de organismos nacionales e internacionales y la misma autoridad ancestral, pero desafortunadamente el mismo cabildo y sus diferentes programas desde la legalización del programa desde el año de 1998 ha sido un poco renuente en la apropiación de los trabajos que se realizan a diario, se conforma con destinar rubros anuales para funcionamiento pero no hay una apropiación socio-política total del proceso de comunicaciones y no han entendido el verdadero valor que tiene la comunicación, por eso es muy difícil velar por el cumplimiento de las metas y objetivos propuestos dentro de ella.

Political frictions became more evident in following year, when the faction aligned with fired communicators became elected as governors – Tata Floro Alberto Tunubala and Vice-governor Tata Jeremias Tunubala. They placed back the fired staff into the radio station. Months later, Mama Asencion Velasco signed a letter where she denounced, this time, the slanders against her group by the returned staff:

Weeks before the cabildo decided to support the re-election of President Santos, a dirty campaign against some Taitas started by Namuy Wam. The night of June 10, through the radio station, the Tatas (current authorities) accused them of ‘override authority’, ‘put sticks in the wheel’ and to ‘negotiate with the opposition to the cabildo within the community’.

Finally, we demand respect from the Tatas and the radio practitioners at Namuy Wam. They should not keep using this radio station to put some against others, nor in service of defamation and slander, and to investigate the issues and engage in information and not to misinform. The authority has to fulfill their promises made at January 1, and stop saying that we rule copying the practices from outside. They have mismanaged the programs, attempting to pay political favors and delivering public funding in the same way (CP, 2014).⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Semanas antes de que el Cabildo decidió apoyar a la reelección del Presidente Santos, había comenzado una campaña de desprestigio en contra de unos taitas por la Emisora Namuy Wam, que remataron directamente por los tatas en la noche del 10 de junio por el mismo medio, que de forma indeterminada pusieron en el escarnio público por supuestas acciones de “suplantación de la autoridad”, “pasar por encima de la autoridad”, “ponerle palos a la rueda”, y hasta “negociando con la comunidad”, que se venía cometiendo en contra del Cabildo.

Finalmente, exigimos respeto y el ejercicio pulcro a los tatas como Autoridades y lo mismo a la Emisora Namuy Wam que no sigan utilizando politiqueramente en favor de unos y en contra de otros con difamaciones y calumnias, que investiguen los temas y se dediquen a informar y no a desinformar, que se cumplan los discursos que se pronunciaron los tatas gobernadores el primero de enero, que textualmente dijeron que el Cabildo saliente había ejercido Autoridad con los criterios de afuera o copiando prácticas de los blancos, pero entonces como lo llamamos todo lo que vemos y sentimos? Los cargos de los programas con favores políticos, el clientelismo, salvo a algunos aciertos, la entrega de recursos públicos bajo el mismo concepto, la prepotencia en el ejercicio de autoridad, retroceso y regresión política de volver a ser seguidores a los partidos tradicionales, pese a que han votado mucha corriente de relación Autoridad a Autoridad

Here, in addition to denouncing the slander practices of those communicators, the political group of Mama Asencion also denounced that the radio station was part of the cabildo apparatus engaged in controversial political actions – for instance, supporting the political campaign for the presidency of Juan Manuel Santos. This action is clearly illegal – these radio stations cannot promote any candidate – and quite contradictory to the anti-establishment discourse of this indigenous group.

Participatory?: One of the supposed features of alternative media is participation. However, this participation is frequently taken for granted. Looking closely at the situation of these radio stations, participation is more complex than it is initially thought. For instance, even though people with some experience in communication – former members of the communication program or volunteers at other community's radio stations – are usually appointed for those positions, nepotism is not uncommon. Often, people without experience become members of the radio station just for their close relationship with the authorities.

The participatory venues of the radio station are also controversial in relation to audiences. For instance, Misak authorities had to restrict the reading of the audience's messages that reach the radio station since the majority of them were love messages and they were provoking serious conflicts between couples and family members. Another more serious example is that political rivals from the cabildo are also banned from the radio station. This situation happened at the 2015 elections where two political Misak rivals were competing for the position of mayor of the municipality of Silvia, Cauca –

one candidate aligned with the cabildo and a rival. The cabildo forbade the stations to transmit to its rival's messages or to have on air his sympathizers.

Tejido de Comunicación de la ACIN (TC-ACIN).

The TC-ACIN is the most famous alternative media project from Cauca. In addition to Radio Payu'mat, the TC-ACIN has also embraced a variety of media projects for internal and external audiences, such as the website www.nasaacin.org, the production of a series of documentaries, murals, and organizing video forums at different localities within the northern area of the Cauca region.

I am presenting the case of the TC-ACIN for two main reasons: first, it provides a very important point of comparison between a less famous radio station – Namuy Wam – with one of the most successful ones – Radio Payu'mat. This comparison shows that, despite some evident cultural, organizational, and political differences, these two projects endure similar hardships that affect the work of the Misak as well as the Nasa media producers, such as lack of economic resources and support from local authorities. Second, the case of the TC-ACIN shows the importance and the potential of radio as a political instrument. As we will see, the TC-ACIN has been fundamental for denouncing the violence of armed groups and the abuses of State supported mining companies in the region. Therefore, this dissertation cannot be taken as a document against indigenous radio stations. Rather, it is a reflection about the role of radio as instrument of inclusion, which has brought benefits, but also new challenges to the indigenous people.

As I earlier explained, the Nasas have engaged in radio production even before the 1990s with Radio Eucha. After their bittersweet experience at Radio Eucha – where they participated, but under the tutoring of the Catholic Vincentian Missionaries –, they requested two licensed community radio stations for the localities of Toribio (Nasa Estereo) in 1995 and Jambalo (Voces de Nuestra Tierra) in 1997. These radio stations were also deeply related and supported by Catholic priests, but this time by priests and former seminarians from the Consolata missionaries, some of whom became highly influenced by Theology of Liberation.

The leaders of this project were Priest Alvaro Ulcue Chocue, the first Nasa priest, and Antonio Bonanomi. These priests, through the methodology *ver* (to see), *juzgar* (to judge), and *actuar* (to act), developed along with members of the Nasa community the *Proyecto Nasa* (PN) in 1980, which sought to create participation channels among Nasa men, women, children, and youth in order to forge their pride, reconstruct their culture, and improve their general living conditions. From this seed, Nasa people launched other participatory programs in other territories, such as the *Proyecto Global* in 1987, the *Movimiento Juvenil* in 1989, 7 other community projects and the *Asociacion de Cabildos Indigenas del Norte del Cauca* (ACIN) to coordinate them.

All these projects were based on a very revolutionary principle of “authorities need to obey the will of people”, which soon created frictions and resistance within the Nasa community. According to Father Bonanomi in an interview via Skype, community elders believed that what needed to be promoted was obedience to traditional

authorities, not empowerment and horizontal participation. Dorado (2004) explains this conflict through the concept of verticality. In the traditional Nasa communication practices all comes from above: the *Kshaw Wala* – one of the main spirits of the Nasa culture – communicates with the Nasa people through *The Walas* – traditional doctors who can interpret dreams and foreseen the future. The Walas, in turn, give advices to community's elders, who are the spokespersons and educators of the family (66). Radio stations, therefore, were seen as instruments for disruption, since the youth started to use them to manifest their inconformity, sometimes against their traditional authorities.

The radio stations motivated several youth to become involved in community work. Looking at the potential of communication, some indigenous authorities and experienced Nasa communicators, supported by Father Bonanomi, launched the First Communication School, in which more than 75 Nasas received technical training in print media and radio and video production, as well as political training inspired in Liberation Theology (Murillo, 2008: 152). In the midst of this school, the Programa Comunidad was launched. Thus they received support for the radio stations at Jambalo and Toribio, as well as resources for the new ACIN radio station, the TC-ACIN's Radio Payumat, in 2002.

Since then, the TC-ACIN has gained a name worldwide for its impressive journalistic work, especially in moments of crisis and mobilization. It was a fundamental tool to denounce the human rights violations against indigenous people from the Colombian army during the presidency of Alvaro Uribe Velez. Thanks to their work, the world learn about the 2008 Social and Communitarian Minga, one of the longest and

largest political mobilizations in Colombian history. The TC-ACIN has also been very important to counteract the Colombian media exclusion and misrepresentation about very important political actions taken by the Nasa people, such as the destruction of machinery involved in illegal mining, the eviction of the Colombian army from their territories, and their territorial recoveries – seizing land from agro-industrial companies. Thanks to the quality of their work, they have received important awards, such as the Spanish's Bartolome de las Casas and the national *Semana* magazine journalism award.

TC-ACIN success has been possible, in great part, due to the continuity of the processes initiated by the Catholic priests in the 1980s since many of the people who received training at this popular schools continue to be involved. Also, TC-ACIN has also benefited from receiving permanent support from external intellectuals with long experience and knowledge working outside and within the Nasa community, such as Mauricio Dorado and Manuel Rosental. Both of them are funding members of the TC-ACIN and have written critical observations about the role of the TC-ACIN in the Nasa community. These are some of their observations:

Beyond denunciation: It is undeniable the impressive work of the TC-ACIN as an instrument for political denunciation. For this reason, its work has been recognized and supported by different journalist and human rights organizations. But, they also engaged in other important cultural practices, such as the promotion of sport events and local artists through music festivals. This has raised the legitimacy of the radio station, especially among grassroots audiences (Dorado, 2004: 81).

Distrusting Radio: The majority of Nasa leaders do not dare to engage with topics in the radio station. In fact, many refuse to speak at the radio station, and those who participate limit their discussion to positive issues. The radio station is rarely seen by authorities as an instrument for criticism, debate, and pluralism. One of the main reasons for this situation is that people is still suspicious about radio. They consider media exposition dangerous since that information can be used by their enemies. This has limited the possibilities and action of this Nasa communicators (Dorado, 2004: 68-69).

Lack of economic resources: In 2004, just two years after being funded, the ACIN authorities decided to close all the ACIN programs that did not generate their own resources. The TC-ACIN survived because that would violate the legal responsibility the ACIN assumed when they accepted to participate at the *Programa Comunidad* (Dorado, 2004: 81). However, their economic problems have been increasing since then, even though the TC-ACIN has been able to consolidate a good audience and a good reputation among local sponsors, has opened new sources of revenue, such as a graphic design office, has received grants from international donors, and has won various competitions organized by the Ministry of Culture. It is very telling that one of the most recognized and successful media projects in Latin America endures such dramatic economic problems. Therefore, it is not hard to imagine the difficult economic situation of less prestigious radio stations.

Lack of authorities' support: As early as 2004, Dorado states that the ACIN had not fully assumed the economic, political, and administrative responsibility of having a radio station (Dorado, 2004: 104). Administrative problems are notorious, especially when the technical problems that the radio station has gone through are analyzed. But, there is something even more complex: the lack of support from the authorities is also motivated by the arising political differences between ACIN authorities and the TC-ACIN. According to the TC-ACIN, there is a “death plan” that puts in danger the existence of the native cultures in Colombia: militarization, and the bureaucratization and cooptation of indigenous authorities (TC-ACIN, 2014).

The harsh criticism from the TC-ACIN to the indigenous authorities can be traced back to 2009, when there was an evident change in the political agenda of the national and regional indigenous institutions – including the ACIN. As Rosental explains, the 2008 Social and Communitarian Minga proposed an anti-establishment political declaration that included: 1. Rejection to free trade policies; 2. Rejection of the militarization of indigenous territories; 3. Rejection of laws that seek the eviction of indigenous people from their territories in order to develop mining projects; 4. Honoring previous commitments acquired by State with indigenous communities; 5. Promoting unity among destitute sectors of the Colombian society. Due to personal interests and political divergences, this declaration has been transmuted into softer and pro-establishment positions, which became evident with the support of indigenous organizations to the reelection of a right-center president Juan Manuel Santos in 2014.

With this political panorama, a communication program with critical positions, such as the TC-ACIN, has two options: lessen their critical commentary and becoming more pro-establishment or assume an open conflict with the indigenous authorities. Based on declarations, such as the “death plan,” the TC-ACIN had assumed the former, which put them in a very difficult situation before their authorities.

Technical Problems: One of the main challenges the TC-ACIN as well as the other radio stations have endured is with their transmission equipment. Often, technical problems put off air these radio stations for long periods of time. The causes of such problems are multiple: the lack of resources for maintenance, sabotage, the weather, and the problems with the electrical infrastructure of the area. Radio Payu’mat was off the air in 2008 due to a sabotage. After more than three years of collecting money and working at lower power, the radio station finally recovered its transmission capacity in 2011. However, a few months later, the equipment was affected again, this time due to a tree that fell into a power grid. In 2013, again, the station was off the air for several months due to technical difficulties (TC-ACIN, 2013).

Harassment from Armed Organizations: The TC-ACIN has endured sabotages and death threats from all different groups that operate in this area. In relation to sabotages, in the midst of the 2008 Social and Communitarian Minga, the majority of the radio transmission equipment of TC-ACIN was burned out as result of an electrical sabotage. They also have frequently endured blockages of their web network list and

Facebook pages. Similar situations have been endured by other radio stations, such as Voces de Nuestra Tierra from Jambalo and Nasa Estereo from Toribio. In relation to death threats, the Red AMCIC has reported that more than 14 indigenous media contributors, especially from the working area of the TC-ACIN have had to flee the area just in the period of 2012 to 2014. In fact, Manuel Rosental was one of those forced to leave its territory (TC-ACIN, 2012).

Conclusions

As we have seen, the case of radios of public interest in Colombia, particularly the case of indigenous radio in Cauca, challenges the traditional cheerful and uncritical views on indigenous media. These accounts tends to illustrate media produced by indigenous people as powerful instruments for counteracting the exclusion and misrepresentations of mass media, preserving indigenous cultures, forging participation within these communities, denouncing the abuses of the State and transnational companies, among others benefits. Some of those who attempt to approach critically indigenous media focuses their analysis on the role of the State, but they generally leave the action of indigenous people out of reach.

I attempt to approach the case of indigenous radio in Cauca focusing in the actions of both parties: the State and indigenous people. In order to approach the State, I summarized and analyzed the laws and some of the main State programs of indigenous radio. As we could see, the State has been a fundamental actor in the birth of indigenous radio in Colombia. However, that support has been also marked by a series of

restrictions in relation to advertising, news analysis, and networking between radio stations.

It is evident that the State action on indigenous radio is: 1. Superficial – it just provided the legal framework for its existence, but at the same time limits the scope of action and power of these radio station; 2. Rhetorical – it provides the legal frameworks, some support and assistance, but it does not guarantee the financial viability of these projects; 3. Paternalistic – it promote the dependency of these projects on national and international external donors; 4. Dangerous – it impose restrictions that force indigenous communicators to violate the law in order to survive, fostering the a culture of illegality; 5. Conflictive – it creates a competitive environment between indigenous communities for funding; 6. Insufficient: it does not touch the structural constrains that have excluded indigenous people and other destitute sectors of the Colombian society from mass media' participation, control, and ownership; 7. Idealistic: it deems radio stations as an instrument “to save” indigenous cultures from acculturation, even though the testimonies from some of the first indigenous radio producers showed that they create cultural tensions (the case of the Arhuacos) and could potentially harm more horizontal forms of communication (in case of the Misak testimony).

But, this chapter also showed that all the problems of indigenous media do not only come from the State actions. The main players in indigenous radio, indigenous people themselves, have also responsibility for the way in these projects have evolved.

The critical analysis of indigenous radio shows its contributions and difficulties. As contributions, it is undeniable that indigenous media has forged a new generations

of indigenous leaders, created new spaces for women's participation, supported some forms of culture, such as music, fostered friendships and alliances between different indigenous communities, and had become very important instruments for political mobilization and denunciation at moments of crisis.

In relation to difficulties, as we could see through the ONIC study on indigenous radio and the discussions on the cases of PCM and TC-ACIN, indigenous authorities have not fully assumed the responsibility of these radio stations as they initially agreed with Programa Comunidad. As a result, after 15 years and millions of dollars invested in these projects, the vast majority of these radio stations are still having enormous technical and economic sustainability problems and difficulties producing their own media productions. In addition, they continue to copy models from commercial radio and, with the exception of the TC-ACIN, they have not been able to become important actors in the Colombian media landscape. Even worse, these radio projects do not contribute much to the reconstruction and resurgence of the Misak and Nasa epistemes.

After discussing the case of evangelical radio in the next chapter, I will return to the discussion of community media. As we will see, the topic of communication had progressively become an instrument of indigenous organizations for capturing resources in benefit of the own political organization, distancing from their own grassroots. But, in the finally chapter, we will see new communication proposals that goes beyond the radiocentric focus of the communication discussion and that seek the reconstruction of epistemic re-existence, which goes far beyond political resistance.

Chapter 4

Evangelical Radio Stations

Any study on the relationship between community media and indigenous inclusion in Cauca would be incomplete if the case of evangelical indigenous radio stations were not considered. I call “evangelical indigenous radio stations” those radio stations, operated by indigenous people that serve indigenous territories, and that focus on the promotion of evangelical Protestantism. Evangelicals are religious dissidents from the traditional Catholic church, closely influenced by a series of Protestant versions from US Christianity, but with a strong “emphasis on personal conversion, assiduous reading of the Bible, separatist ethics, and active evangelism” (Salinas, 2009: 9).

In the indigenous communities of Cauca, the presence of evangelical radio stations is well-known. For instance, at time of my fieldwork, there were two very popular evangelical radio stations in Guambia: *Srro Wam* (Buenas Nuevas) and *Pentecostal Stereo*. In 2015, another radio station, *Ñu Wam* (La Gran Voz), was inaugurated. The story of evangelical indigenous radio stations is quite long and rich. For instance, *Sro Wam* has been on-air for more than 20 years and belongs to a group of three radio stations that serves areas of Cauca, Nariño, and Huila. *Pentecostal Stereo*, meanwhile, has been on air for more than 15 years. These communication projects have received support from various sources, including external transnational evangelical organizations, regional evangelical congregations, and local businesses. However, audiences themselves are among of the most important economic contributors of these

radio stations. This is something that is far from happening at the cabildo's radio station, *Namuy Wam*.

Despite their notable presence and the active participation of audiences in supporting these radio stations, evangelical radio stations are overwhelmingly ignored by media scholars. This chapter seeks to contribute to fill that gap by focusing on the role of evangelical indigenous radios within the Misak community. It shows the history of these radio stations, analyzing their content and discussing why they are popular among Misak audiences. This chapter is not limited to discussing the contributions and limitations of these evangelical radios. It also shows the complex role of evangelism in the process of indigenous inclusion of the Misak community settled in Guambia. As we will see, these radio stations have also become instruments through which people can discuss and find relief for acute social and public health problems, such as alcoholism and domestic violence. In fact, these radio stations, as well as the evangelical temples to which they belong, have become the only institutions that provide any sort aid to the victims of these problems, who happen to be mostly women.

In addition to discussing some of the positive contributions of evangelical churches and their radio stations, this chapter also discusses some of the conflicts that they have generated. The social conditions and the meaning of evangelism have radically changed since its initial arrival in the Misak territory in the 1930s. From being a peripheral group of people fifty years ago, evangelicals are currently more than half of the Misak population according to Misaks's authorities. After the proclamation of freedom of religion by the 1991 Constitution, evangelical and Pentecostal churches have

rapidly mushroomed. This strong presence has signified more power for evangelicals in general within the Misak community, radicalizing some members of the evangelical younger generations, creating strong clashes with indigenous authorities, and opposing the cabildo's education agenda, cultural traditions, and spiritual practices different than their own.

In addition to providing a nuanced account at Protestant radio stations in Guambia and evangelism itself, this chapter also challenges some theoretical positions through community media studies has approached the case of evangelical radio stations. For instance, Gumcio Dagron and Tuftle (2006) defines the field of communication and social change as a field that studies a way of developing and strengthening people's confidence and skills to tell their own stories, explain their needs, and advocate for the find of change they want . Despite this very open definition, communication and social change scholars has not considered evangelical radios as promoters of participatory and inclusive values. Traditionally, evangelical radio has been deemed as an instrument for conservatism and regression against social progress. As the case of the evangelical radios stations at Guambia shows, the reality is more complex: evangelical radios promote social change – individualistic, but also some forms of community solidarity.

This chapter begins with a theoretical introduction to evangelical radio. As we will read, there is the lack of knowledge about evangelical radio in Latin America. The existing academic work has largely deemed these radio stations as regressive, conservative and harmful for grassroots communities for their role indoctrinating passive audiences into religious fundamentalism. Next, in order to introduce the

discussion into the case of the Misak people in Cauca, this paper provides an overview of the history of evangelism within the indigenous people in Colombia. As we will see, despite its slow entering, evangelism has able to deeply root into the Misak society. However, through this process, evangelism has transmuted from being led by external missionary organizations into very syncretic local institutions. All this previous information is presented to understand the context and evolution of evangelical indigenous radio in Guambia.

Evangelical radio and theory

The topic of evangelical radio and indigenous people in Latin America has not been much explored by communication scholars. It is possible to find some research work, especially on the Ecuadorian context (Mitchell, 1992) (Andrade, 2010), where these type of radio stations have a long presence. Ecuador was the headquarters of the HCJB, a powerful transnational network of evangelical radio stations that, for many years, was one of the largest radio station systems in the world. During the 1960s, this media project had such economic power that they built that they own hydroelectric dam to provide energy to their operations (Mitchell, 1992). If evangelism has significantly grown and evangelical radios have flourished through the region, why is this topic so ignored by communication scholars?

First, based on my own experience, approaching evangelical radio stations from a critical perspective is not easy. In my case, for several months I lobbied reluctant Misak evangelical radio practitioners for carrying out an interview or having a visit to

their working place. When they finally accepted, many of them were quite reserved and careful with the information disclosed. Despite its inconvenience, I was able to collect valuable information, but it cost me time and effort.

Second, as Claire-Harmon (2011) explains in relation to Christian radio in the United States, one of the difficulties to study these type of radio stations is that there are more than 36 thousand types of Christian denominations, from traditional Protestant churches up to newer Pentecostal churches. The situation in Colombia is quite similar, there are more than 5 thousand registered Christian congregations and each year there appear, on average, 500 more (Jimenez, 2014). Many of them use radio stations and video to defuse their messages. Thus, the study of evangelical radio stations in the United States represents an extraordinary opportunity to scholars who want to research these radio stations in Latin America since both cases are quite large.

White (in Claire-Harmon, 2011), for instance, divides US Christian radio stations into four categories to make approachable such a large field: 1. Part of the public sphere, 2. Popular among revivalist evangelical movements, 3. Answering to institutionalized churches, and 4. as active alternative voices for social change. In relation to the last category, the author adds:

Though it is seemingly contradictory for “Christian” to be considered “alternative,” because generically Christians are the largest religious group in the United States, the demographic considers itself underrepresented in mainstream media. Mainstream radio plays songs with references to sex, alcohol, and drug use and gang-banging. Thus, some Christian radio focuses on being an alternative to mainstream radio and entertainment (Claire Harmon, 2011)

Although this explanation is quite superficial, White opened the possibility to consider evangelical radio stations as instruments to foster social change. This goes against the pre-concepts of many communication scholars who have reluctantly rejected that idea. Dagron (2007), one of the most prolific media scholars in Latin America, makes a distinction between “good radio stations” – the Good Side of God – and “problematic radio stations” – the Wrong Side of God. In relation to the latter, he refers to those many Catholic radio stations that, influenced by Liberation Theology, promoted the idea of popular radio since the 1960s. In relation to the former, he mainly refers to radio stations owned by evangelical churches in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. These radio stations, according to him, are full of “content having little to do with democracy, support of local culture, or the struggle for Human Rights” (204).

Despite the harshness of that statement, Dagron (2007) rapidly recognizes the general lack of knowledge and deep analysis on evangelical radio. He points out the difficulty from drawing the line between the “good” and the “wrong” since all radio stations are different from each other: “Some stations have a mixed programming that combines religious content with advice on health or education issues. Some have provided free airtime to local organizations to prepare their own programming” (204-205). He finishes stating the necessity for more research “to capture better the essence of religious radio stations—from the perspective of communities” (205). The purpose of this chapter is to contribute exactly to what he is asking for: the understanding at evangelical radio stations from the perspective of the Misak community.

Due to the complexities around evangelism itself, the Misak radio stations are approached based on their historical context. This will show their nuances, breaking the dichotomy formulated by Dagron between “good” and “bad”. In order to do this, we first discuss the history of evangelism in Guambia – its arrival and historical transformation - and the current state of evangelism in this area.

Evangelism in Guambia

Through the Cauca region the evangelical presence is quite strong, and Guambia is not an exception. According to Misak authorities, more than 50 percent of the Misak population are permanent members of one of the 35 evangelical churches located in Guambia in 2015 (interview with Jeremias Tunubala). In addition, during my extensive fieldwork in the area, I found it hard to meet Misak people who have not been involved with any evangelical church at some point of their lives. Considering that one hundred years ago the Catholic Church kept holding power from colonial times over the indigenous population, the ascendance of evangelism among this indigenous communities is quite surprising.

In the specific case of the Misak community, Gros (1999) explains that the rapid advance of evangelism is not much related to faith. Rather, evangelism represented an alternative, rejection and resistance against the centuries of historical exclusion, dismissiveness, and exploitation of the Catholic Church over indigenous populations. One of the most explicit examples of the exploitative practices of the Catholic Church

against indigenous populations is the rules imposed by the Catholics for the *fiestas de los santos* (saint festivities).

Since colonial times, the Church and local authorities blended Spanish traditional fiestas with indigenous celebrations in order to create holidays in which indigenous people had the opportunity to be part of a public celebration. One of the most famous of these celebrations is the *Dia de los Muertos*, which the Misak people still celebrate. These celebrations involves offerings to the saints (flowers, food, animals and agricultural products), religious services, as well as heavy alcohol consumption. Indigenous people acquired debts with the Church and local businesspeople in order to participate, having to pay back generally with long hours of labor. Evangelicals started to gain supporters by denouncing these practices, telling people that they would not be punished for not participating, and discussing the negative consequences of alcohol consumption.

Catholics also exploited indigenous people through forcing them to give free labor, supporting abusive land owners, create divisions among members of the Misak community, and even expropriating native people from their own land (Gros, 1999: 189). For instance, according to Troyan (2010), John Rowe, US archeologist who worked few years in the area in the 1940s, documented how the priest of the municipality of Silvia, Padre Vivas, had various indigenous emissaries who collected the money from other indigenous people who owed to the Church.

In those first years, evangelism also dignified indigenous people by providing possibilities for participation and ascension into their institutional structures, opposing different exploitative practices from the Catholic Church, facilitating women's participation, accepting some banned folk religious practices, and studying and using indigenous languages forbidden by the Catholic Church's educational institutions (Gros, 1999: 190-192).

Despite these positive aspects, evangelical missionaries cannot be seen as totally progressive and altruistic. At some moments, they have represented a liberating force, but other times they have become a very regressive, embracing conservative political positions, condemning traditions and knowledges, and disrupting internal hierarchies. For instance, evangelical missionaries demanded a strict puritan life from their followers, condemning drinking, smoking, and dancing, and rejecting to baptize people with debts (Troyan, 2010: 7).

The initial progressiveness of evangelism in Guambia can be explained as a strategy to gain followers in those indigenous areas. Catholics used similar tactics among indigenous cultures in areas previously controlled by evangelicals. This was the case in various areas of the Amazon region, where evangelicals reached strong influence over several Guahibo, Cuiva, and Guayabero territories. During the 1940s-1950s, evangelicals convinced hundreds of indigenous people of the pagan character of their spiritual rituals, pressured them to burn out their music instruments and stop consuming their sacred plants. During the 1960s and 1970s, Catholic missionaries influenced by Liberation Theology took advantage of people's dissatisfaction with evangelical

restrictions and promoted the return of old spiritual practices in order to erode evangelical influence (Stoll, 1982: 253)

The history of evangelism in Guambia is full of contradictions and nuances. For this reason, I follow approached using four phases proposed by Demera (2009): 1. The protestant introduction into the community in the 1930s to 1980s; 2. The religious pluralization during the 1980s; 3. The renewal of Pentecostalism and; 4. The rise of a strong syncretic religious movement (108).

The protestant introduction into the Misak community in the 1930s to 1980s

The arrival of the Christian Missionary Alliance (CMA) in 1930s, the first organized Protestant missionary group that arrived in Guambia, marked the beginning of the first historical phase proposed by Demera (2009). The CMA slowly immersed into the Misak society, starting their evangelical work in the Guambia area of Puente Real. In 1943, their first missionaries from the United States settled; they celebrated their first baptisms in 1945; and they inaugurated their first permanent temple in 1954. This slow inclusion was due to the fierce opposition from the Catholic Church that had the monopoly of evangelization over all indigenous populations since the signing of the 1887 concordat between Colombia and the Vatican (Rojas, 46).

Although virulent actions of violence against evangelicals that included burning houses, signing harassing songs to kids from evangelical families and even killings, the evangelical community continued growth and, in 1955, they inaugurated their first

school in the Misak area of Puente Real. This school became emblematic for having as first director Jacinta Tunubala, the first woman who occupied such a position in Guambia (Searing and Osuna, 1999: 205; Troyan, 2010: 111). In 1955, CMA gave a further step towards the expansion of educational and bilingual programs, opening the Biblical Institute in the Misak area of Ambachico, where members of indigenous communities from all parts of Cauca received training in indigenous language and evangelization (208-218).

This evangelical school broke the Catholic's monopoly of education, at institutional and philosophical levels, since it offered the Misak formal bilingual education for first time (Searing and Osuna, 1999: 204). Among all the evangelical strategies for gaining a space within the Misak society, bilingual education was perhaps the most effective. This strategy allowed them to gain closeness and sympathies among indigenous people and unveiled the colonialist banning against indigenous languages that the Second Vatican Council finally ended in 1965 (Cely, 2011: 51).

While the CMA kept consolidating its influence in Guambia, the controversial Summer Institute of Linguistic (SIL) arrived in 1965 with the mission of translating the bible into the Misak language. Founded in 1936 by William Cameron Townsend, a radical US Christian, the SIL, also known as the Wycliffe bible translators, in honor to John Wycliffe, the first known bible translation to English language in the XIV century, is one of the largest, more powerful and more controversial missionary organizations from the United States.

This powerful missionary organization reached an impressive power and prestige in the middle of the twenty century. As early as 1984, the SIL have reached impressive numbers: They were permanently working in more than 40 countries around the world, trained more than 5 thousand missionaries who guided the translation work of more than 80 thousand people, and cooperated with important linguistic institutes, primarily, the International Linguistic Center, at University of Texas at Arlington, as well as the Universities of Oklahoma, North Dakota, and Washington. Thanks to this impressive institutional support, they were able to translate the bible to more than 360 indigenous languages around the world (Stoll, 1982: 17-26).

The SIL always has presented itself, not as evangelical missionaries, but as a scientific institution interested in the understanding of indigenous cultures through the study of their languages. This strategy, as well as their generous donors and the support of the United States diplomacy, helped them to open doors at several countries around the world. This was the case in Colombia, where the SIL became officially invited by Gregorio Hernandez de Alba, director of the Division of Indigenous Affairs, to systematize indigenous language and counteract the abusive power of the Catholic Church over these populations (Trojan, 2010: 112).

In 1962, the SIL and the Colombian government signed a contract in which the SIL committed to research the indigenous languages in exchange of the institutional support of the Colombian State. The SIL opened a large center of operations at Loma Linda, in the Meta region, in which translators from 45 different indigenous communities had the task to translate the bible to their respective languages.

Although the institute achieved an unprecedented success in the systematization of several indigenous languages, their presence in Colombia has been involved with various controversies. According to several anthropologies, linguistics, their universities and research centers, the SIL has promoted of divisions within the indigenous communities, engaged in illegal mining, and been involved with conflicts with the Catholic Church as well as other local evangelical churches (Stoll, 1982: 268).

The situation of the SIL in Colombia became so complex that Chester Bitterman, one of its missionaries, was kidnapped and assassinated by members of the leftist guerilla M19 (Sierra, 2001). Even though the SIL and Colombia broke their institutional contract in 2002, the SIL have continued working with several indigenous communities in Colombia, including the Misaks (Celi, 2011).

At the moment of their arrival in Guambia, SIL's missionaries Thomas and Judy Branks settled in the area of Pueblito, Guambia. According to Mama Ana Tunubala, a Misak translator who continues working with Mr. Branks after almost fifty years, the Branks started to work with people without identifying themselves as evangelicals at the moment of their arrival. At Pueblito, they stayed in the house of one of the cabildo's general secretaries at that time, trained a few non-evangelicals as translators, and rented a small plot where they harvested different agricultural products. After some years living in Pueblito, the community granted them a piece of land to build a house in Puente Real, with the condition of returning it to the Misaks at the moment of their departure. Thomas and Judy Branks finally left in 1980, when the Misak evangelicals and non-evangelicals started the process to recover their land seized by powerful landowners. Mama Ana

Tunubala states that they left due to the chaos and violence that this processes unleashed. However, she and other volunteers continued working in translation with Mr. Branks and other linguists affiliated to the SIL. After finishing the translation of the New Testament, religious songs, and other works, they are committed with finishing the translation of the Old Testament (Ana Tunubala interview).

The SLI contributed to the research, not only of the Misak language, but also of the Misak culture in general. The translators affiliated to this institute have produced more than 27 publications about linguistics, phonology, literacy education, linguistics and literature, language documentation, discourse analysis, community development, and anthropology. In addition, SLI missionaries' strict discipline, commitment and passion with their work motivated various evangelical and non-evangelical Misaks to continue carrying research on the Misak language up to these days. For instance, the Misak leader Mama Barbara Muelas – a former Vice-governor, director of the Misak radio station, school professor, linguist, and author of several books about the Misak language, tradition and history – recognizes the contributions of the SLI to the study of the Misak language, despite her criticism on the presence of evangelicals in Guambia.

However, the role of SLI in Guambia has not been excepted from controversy. The SLI's vision of progress, inclusion, and development, which was oriented to individual over collective empowerment, clashed with the collective struggle for territorial recovery that took force during the 1970s. For instance, in an interview carried by Rappaport (1984) in 1975, three years later after the Misak started to recover their usurped land from powerful mestizos, a Misak translator of the SLI expressed his/her

individual oriented position on indigenous struggle. According to this informant, it was better for the Misaks to buy plots of land located outside of the *resguardo* in individual bases rather than engaging in land occupation and other radical collective political actions (117).

During this first stage of the incursion of evangelism in Guambia, the arrival of transnational evangelical missionary institutions, such as CMA and SLI, opened the door to new venues of modernity represented in transnational relationships, trips, educational, health, and agricultural production. The adoption of these elements brought positive as well as negative consequences. For instance, agrochemicals increased momentarily production, but also degraded the quality of land as it has become evident through the current low production at those areas subjected to intervention (interview Jeremias Tunubala).

Early evangelical developmental programs also included community radio. In 1975, Misaks from Puente Real ventured, for first time, into this type of project, but the high cost of electricity and other technical problems precluded further this project (interview Taita Henry Tunubala). The incursion of evangelicals into the Misak society also represented a strong power disruption within this society. As it is mentioned before, evangelicals challenged the colonial dominance of the Catholics, creating new alternatives for social and religious participation. However, this disruption also brought negative consequences. For instance, evangelicals campaigned against shamanistic traditional practices, participation in collective activities, such as carnivals, and even the legitimization of the community authority practices (Demera, 2009).

Beyond all positive and negative outcomes from the evangelical intervention in Guambia, it is clear that the vast majority of Misaks, evangelical and non-evangelical, decided to support the political organizations, mobilizations, land seizures even against the will of external missionaries. This decision marked the beginning of the second period proposed by Demera (2009).

The religious pluralization during the 1980s

In 1979, the Misak people, led by the evangelical Governor Taita Javier Morales and supported by several university students, academics and activists, initiated one of their most important political and social uprisings in the 20th century. This political uprising, continued by 1980 Governor Taita Segundo Tunubala, included the proclamation of a political document called *Manifiesto Guambiano*; the recognition as members of the Misak community to the *Nam Trick* speakers who lived in neighbor areas as *terrajeros*; the creation of *Autoridades Indigenas de Colombia*, an organization dissenting from the CRIC; and the recovery of the previously usurped cattle farm *Las Mercedes* – now Santiago de Guambia (Cavides, 2002).

The recovery of *Las Mercedes* became a Misak symbol of their fight, not for just a piece of land, but for their territory. This struggle included fighting for the recognition of the Misak culture, their collective rights and their territorial autonomy. One of the challenges endured by Misak leaders and external activists was to convince Misak evangelicals to join the majority and fight for the Misak as a collective, rather than for individual causes. This was somewhat difficult considering the opposition of external

evangelical missionaries. In order to achieve evangelical participation, the Misak leaders and external sympathizers launched an aggressive media campaign that included audio productions and booklets on biblical messages and religious songs that were distributed in assembles through the Misak territory. These messages showed that Christianity, rather than condemning people's uprisings, promotes radical political mobilization in case of injustice. One of the songs that compose the series "El Cielo se hace Con tus Manos" states:

To desalambrar (take out the fences) to desalambrar
 this land is ours, it is yours and his
 of Peter, Mary, John and Joseph (bis)/
 I ask to the people
 if you have not thought about
 if our hands are ours
 why is not ours what they produce?⁸⁹ (Fundación Colombia Nuestra).

This type of religious proselytism were more strategic than a product of any sort of religious political agenda from the organizers. In fact, many of those who produced these materials were leftists and atheists who saw the necessity to counteract the highly conservative reading of the bible predicated by evangelical missionaries (Maria Teresa Fidji, interview). This campaign raised people's consciousness and motivated evangelicals to join non-evangelicals in this political uprising. The final involvement of evangelicals was so high that they were the ones who carried the first collective land seizure in the area of Tranal in 1978 (interview, Eduardo Almendra).

⁸⁹A desalambrar a desalambrar, Que la tierra es nuestra, es tuya y de aquel, De Pedro, María, de Juan y José (bis), Yo pregunto a los presentes, Si no se han puesto a pensar ¿Que si las manos son nuestras, no es nuestro lo que nos dan?

The recovery of the area of *Santiago* by the Misak unleashed a series of actions that challenged the influence of the traditional Catholic Church and landowners. This helped Misak authorities to gain political and social autonomy. One of the most symbolic of these actions was the change of place where the Misak celebrate the possession of the new cabildo every year, from at the front of the central square at front of the Catholic Church in the municipality of Silvia, to *Santiago*, a place which became a symbol of the Misak's political and cultural struggle.

The Misak, supported by a group of external activists known as *colaboradores*, also started to proclaim harsh criticisms against Catholicism – its progressive and conservative versions – and against a sector of external supporters aligned with the traditional left, known as *solidarios*, for attempting indoctrinate indigenous people (Cavides, 2002). According to Demera (2009), the secularization of the cabildo and the open opposition against traditional leftist groups motivated evangelical participation in positions of decision making within the Misak's cabildo.

Demera (2009) also explains that another powerful motivation for evangelicals to participate in the 1980s Misak uprising was to enjoy the benefits that resulted from these actions. The escalation of violence against indigenous leaders, from powerful landowners and leftist guerrillas that opposed to the idea of indigenous autonomy, made radical evangelical missionaries move away, leaving the evangelical Misak without their condemnation for participation. With space for political maneuver, Misak evangelicals had the option of participating and becoming beneficiaries from land recoveries, the land purchases in other areas of the department of Cauca, and the new

health and education services that the cabildo started to provide to their population (Gros, 1999; Demera, 2009; Troyan, 2010).

The Renewal of Pentecostalism

During 1980s and 1990s, many new evangelical organizations arrived to Guambia. This was a result of many factors, including the weakening of the Catholic power over the Misak population, the secularization of the cabildo, the departure of the external evangelical missionaries, the acquisition of land of Misak people in different areas of the country, and the later recognition of the 1991 constitution of the right of freedom of worship.

Differently to the first wave of evangelical missionaries that arrived to Guambia, these new churches did not have a special ethnic agenda. This opened the door for the arrival of more radical external evangelical pastors, who did not consider special arrangements and negotiations between their orthodoxy and local practices. This was, in great part, a strategy to distinguish themselves from the first evangelical missionaries who arrived to Guambia. This radical approach sought to foster more radical evangelical community, which has been the strategy for the reproduction of Protestantism in Latin America (Demera, 2009: 116).

Despite this initial radicalism, this religious congregations started to realize that their consolidation among the Misak population depended on the inclusion of local traditions. As a solution, missionary organizations opened participation spaces at organizing level to some evangelical Misaks, who incorporated local knowledges,

introducing and helping to rationalize the arrival of these organizations within the Misak context. The case of the Brazilian Pentecostal *Dios es Amor* is one of the most representatives of these cases.

Dios es Amor was promoted by local pastors by mixing the interpretation of the bible with the analysis of people's dreams (Demera, 2006). According to Juan Tunubala, a former member of the Christian Missionary Alliance and who later became one of these local pastors, he became a member of *Dios es Amor* trying to seek the meaning of a message of a conversation he had with an angel in one of his dreams. Thanks to the support of this religious congregation, Mr. Tunubala gained various followers interested in his dreams with angels, a situation that motivated him to organize meetings every Saturday nights to discuss and resolve problems that have affected the people at the community, such as alcoholism, infidelity, lack of money and health. This strategy of serving as space for joy and hope through sections of healing has contributed to open spaces for religious congregations, such as *Dios es Amor*, within the Misak community in the last years (Demera, 2006: 259).

The Rise of a Strong Syncretic Religious Movement

Misak society has been deeply transformed by the appearance of evangelical religious congregations. As mentioned before, Misak authorities calculate that more than half of the Misak population are currently self-identified as *evangelicos*. However, the Misak evangelism is far from being homogeneous. Among the 35 non-Catholic religious evangelical institutions in Guambia, it is possible to find Protestant

evangelicals from all kinds of denominations, such as Pentecostals, volunteers affiliated to SLI, transnational organizations, such as World Vision, as well as members of other religious denominations, such as Jehovah Witnesses.

The consolidation of evangelism in Guambia has been possible, in great part, due to the active participation of local people in positions of leadership and power within these new evangelical organizations. This participatory process was a result of the rejection by Misak evangelicals of the radicalism of external evangelical leaders who opposed blending the practice of the evangelical faith with Misak traditions. Rather than abandoning evangelism, Misak evangelical leaders decided to found local versions of external evangelical churches. This is the case of the Pentecostal *Dios es Amor* as well as the *Alianza Cristiana Misionera Guambiana de Colombia*, made up at former members of the ACM from Puente Real. In the case of the former, Juan Tunubala (interviewed by Demera, 2006) states that they decided to create their own church since the people from Cali condemned their use of their traditional dress:

They said they did not allow that type of thought because in the Bible says that the culture does not survive, not even our dressing, they did not allow it... they insisted us to leave our tradition, and we say, come on! We cannot leave our tradition, things that are productive, that are development for our community⁹⁰ (Demera, 2006: 261)

Similarly to Juan Tunubala, many of these religious leaders incorporated some of Misak traditions into their religious cults. In the concrete case of *Dios es Amor*, they

⁹⁰ Que no permitían esa clase de pensamientos ni cultura, porque estaba escrito en la Biblia que la cultura no supervive, ni siquiera el vestuario de nosotros, ellos no lo permitían... Ellos insistían que dejáramos la costumbre, pero nosotros ¡por favor! La costumbre no podemos dejar, cosas que son edificables, que son de desarrollo para la comunidad.

incorporated water into their healing rituals, a very important element for the Misak's traditional medicine (Demera, 2009). To date, more research is needed to see whether or not these syncretic practices mean a revitalization of the Misak culture via evangelism. According to preliminary conclusions, the Pentecostalist appropriation of shamanistic Misak practices has revitalized some traditions, but also led to forgetting of other practices and rituals (Demera, 2006; Beltran, 2011).

In my fieldwork, I observed that new religious and ethnical identities have appeared through this reconfiguration of practices. For instance, one of the most remarkable characteristics of the contemporary Misak evangelical practices is mobility within the different churches. Demera (2006) explains that Taita Augustin Tumiña, a member of the church *Dios es Amor* at the time of his fieldwork, was previously affiliated to different religious cults, such as *Pentecostal Internacional*, *Alianza Cristiana y Misionera*, *Jehova Witnesses*, and *the Torre Fuerte Church*.

The case of Taita Augustin is not uncommon: I had the opportunity to meet Misaks, especially women, who have been affiliated to several churches for short periods of time. For instance, one of the students I worked with was first evangelical and later she joined the Catholic congregation *Misioneras de la Madre Laura*. Now, she identifies as a non-member of any Church, but she is a current volunteer of the evangelical organization World Vision, and she listens to evangelical radio stations at moments of crisis in her life (interview Liliana Tamayo).

This female young informant is just one of many women who appeal to evangelical services seeking relief from their emotional problems. Even though the situation of Misak women has improved in relation to political participation and educational opportunities since the 1980s, they have continued to be the main victims of domestic and sexual violence. In February 2014, the cabildo of Guambia convoked all Misak cabildos (more than 18 in seven regions of Colombia) to discuss possible solutions for the rampant violence against women within Misak territories. More than 200 women showed up, but did not dare to speak until the authorities split the crowd between men and women. Once women were alone, they started denouncing all sorts of physical and psychological violence they have endured. Although many of these actions happened several years ago, that was the first time many of them dared to say something about it.

Due to the lack of funding, investigation tools, personnel trained in criminal research, and technical capacity of the cabildo's *Programa de Justicia* – the program in charge of investigating and judging crimes that involved the Misak people–, many of the perpetrators of crimes against women never face any sort of punishment for their actions. For the cabildo it is very hard to handle these cases. For instance, in addition to cases in which violence is involved, they also have to take care of more common cases, such as homosexuality and infidelity – both punished by the Misak internal law. As a result, the cabildo has storage lots of documentation of unresolved cases that involved all sorts of violent actions, such as rapes, personal injuries, and assassinations. A former member of the cabildo explained to me: “when a case is reported, a hearing is convoked

with the accused and the accuser. If the case cannot be resolved immediately for lack of evidence, it is archived. These cases are almost never resolved”⁹¹ (Bárbara Muelas interview).

This lack of justice is aggravated by the lack of resources to help the victims of this type of violence: the *Programa de Salud* – the program that provides health care to the community – does not have any mental care program within the community and these kind of programs outside of the community are very scarce and hard to access. For these reasons, women seek relief, support and a temporary escape during difficult moments at evangelical churches. Similar to the case of the informant #1, many of these women are not permanently affiliated to evangelical congregations, but many of them sought temporary support and relief in the services and connections offered by these churches.

Another demographic highly attracted by evangelical churches are the youth. In addition to have access to emotional support in moments of grief, the young Misaks find in evangelical churches opportunities to establish external contacts and relationships outside of the community. Evangelical churches often organize sport, social and religious events that attract people from within and outside Guambia. This is the case of the 2015 *Siembra* (harvest) organized by the radio station *Srío Wam* to collect funding for a acquiring and installing more powerful transmission equipment. This three-day event convoked more than a thousand people from different groups, including Misak

⁹¹ “cuando se presenta un caso, se hace una audiencia para escuchar las partes. Pero si no se puede resolver el caso inmediatamente por falta de pruebas, se archiva y de ahí casi nunca se resuelve.”

authorities, non-evangelical Misaks, members of the different evangelical churches from within and outside Guambia, and pastors from the cities of Popayan and Cali. They participated in sporting events (cycling, basketball, and football), sold food, listened to the preaching of the pastors, and preached.

These Misak evangelical organizations also participate in religious events in different regions outside Guambia. For many youth, these events are the only opportunities that they have to travel, meet people, and establish relationships outside of the community. These relationships became fundamental for those who want to find working and educational opportunities in Popayan, Cali, and Bogota (Liliana Camayo, interview).

The evangelical churches also attracted young Misak by offering them access to musical training and musical instruments. For instance, the siblings Rosa Maria and John Montano commented to me that they, as well as many other of their friends, joined an evangelical church in order to learn how to play guitar and drums when they were late teens (interview, Rosa Montano).

As we can see, it is not possible to generalize evangelism as either a regressive-conservative force nor as progressive power. In my stay in Guambia, I met all sorts of evangelicals and former evangelicals, some of them with very respectful positions about the Misak culture and practitioners of some traditions. For instance, the evangelical Mariano Cuchillo, son of an evangelical leader from the region of Tranal – one of the most evangelical areas of Guambia – is a practitioner and a very knowledgeable about

the traditional Misak music and the Misak spiritual traditions. Due to his commitment and knowledge, he is often chosen to represent the community at different events outside of the community. But I also meet evangelicals who refuse to use the Misak dress, disown traditional Misak medicine, and deem Misak symbology as satanic.

Although it is possible to find evangelicals that engaged in Misak culture as well as many others that are not interested, the radicalization of some of the leading sectors of evangelical community within Guambia is evident. For instance, the 2013 Misak cabildo, which was led an evangelical governor and vice-governor, and the evangelicals of Puente Real founded a school to provide education to kids from evangelical families of this region. In 2014, the directors of this school and the members of the new cabildo started to have clashes due to the evangelical orientation of the school's education. The Puente Real's teachers refused the order of the cabildo to teach children about Misak spirituality since they were leading more towards biblical teaching. In principle, this educational approach goes against the Colombian law since institutions that received public funding, such as this one, have to provide secular education. But, even more problematic, this type of education represents a clear danger for the consolidation of the epistemic Misak project this community have historically fought for. These are the instances where one can see how a very serious conflict between evangelicals and non-evangelicals are being fostered within the Misak community. For now, what unifies these two sectors is the practice of authority represented in the cabildo. For conviction, necessity or convenience, the vast majority of the inhabitants of Guambia still participating in this exercise of self-governing. But, as we have seen, the social,

economic and religious visions rapidly change, thus it is impossible to foresee if the is unity will continue much longer.

The Role of Evangelical Radio

After looking at the historical and current state of evangelism in Guambia, we turn to the specific case of evangelical radio in Guambia. 20 years after the first attempt of establishing an evangelical radio station in 1975, another generation of evangelical leaders from the Church *Alianza Misionera Cristiana Guambiana*, headed by David Tunubala, established the radio station Srro Wam (Buenas Nuevas). According to Jeremias Tunubala, one of the volunteers who participated in this project, the funding for this radio station came from a small fundraising program carried out in Puente Real and the support of the Canadian missionary organization Galcom International (interview Jeremias Tunubala). In order to fulfil their goal of broadcasting “the Gospel in every tribe, tongue and nation” (GALCOM, 2016), this missionary organization carried partnerships with local churches in native societies around the world to install radio studios and distribute solar power radios. Due to the continuing work of the Misak evangelicals at Puente Real, two branches of this radio station were established in a Misak settlement in the region of Huila and in a community of the Awa indigenous people in the region of Nariño in 2013 and 2014 respectively. Currently, it is possible to listen to these radio stations via internet.

According to Taita Jeremias, the initial project around this radio station was to create a participatory space in which people had the opportunity to speak about their

problems in the Misak language. At the beginning, the contact with the community made this radio station a sort of “communication school” for some radio practitioners who later worked at the cabildo’s radio station. This is the case of Taitas Jose Antonio Trochez and Eduardo Almendra, who after gaining recognition as communicators at Srío Wam, became successful staff members at the cabildos’ radio station *Namuy Wam*.

Even though this evangelical radio station had an initial mission to become a communication instrument for evangelicals and non-evangelicals, some former volunteers of the radio station and listeners considered that through the years it was become less participatory and more Christian radical. For instance, volunteers and frequent participants are carefully selected from among current leaders of the *Alianza Misionera Cristiana Guambana*, they have to be baptized as Christians and married, in case of having a partner (Taita Eduardo Almendra).

Srío Wam is currently directed by the evangelical pastor, Alvaro Dagua. I met Mr. Dagua for the first time at the end of 2014, in a visit to the radio station of myself and a group of Misak students I worked in the *infograma* project (see chapter six). All of the radio station staff – around five people – were very interested in the drawings, especially those referring to Misak’s historical events. The situation changed and became a little tense when they observed representations about some symbols of the Misak spirituality. For instance, they were very uncomfortable with the figure of the *serpies*, a mythological Misak animal who opened underground holes that produce earthquakes. They associated this figure with a snake, symbol of sin for Christianity. Mr. Dagua also manifested his skepticism about the representations of the Misak myth

of creation of life, which are mainly based on the concepts proposed by Taita Avelino Dagua, one of the most recognized Misak philosophers. Mr. Dagua suggested that Taita Avelino's narratives lack coherent arguments, especially the ones related to the Misak's myth of origin of life.

One of the most interesting aspects of evangelical pastors, such as Mr. Dagua, is the way they assume their indigenous identity. After the first encounter at the radio station, I met him on several occasions within the Misak territory, not dressing in the Misak traditional dress. Surprisingly, in a video posted by the Christian Broadcasting Network website *Mundo Cristiano Latinoamerica*, Mr. Dagua presented himself as member of the Misak community and dressed in the traditional Misak dress at an evangelical event in the city of Cali.

Similarly, Jhan Carlos Chirimuscay Yalanda, famous for being the first Misak child evangelical preacher, singer, and musician, attends external events dressing as Misak, but when the presentation is within Guambia, he performs and preaches dressing in suits and ties. This identity playing might be influenced by two sides of the "same coin": on the one hand, Mr. Dagua, the young Chirimuscay, and others might seek to satisfy the desire of external donors for successful cases of "indigenous" conversion to evangelism. This guarantees them access to resources, places, and social circles outside of Guambia. On the other hand, these preachers promote the idea of individual empowerment and material success, increasing their popularity among the Misak population who desire to succeed in an individual free-market. In short, these Misak

pastors do not have any problem to profit from assuming or rejecting, according to the circumstances, their indigenous identity.

The second oldest and largest evangelical radio station in Guambia is *Pentecostal Stereo*, located in the area of Villanueva. Established in 2001 by the members of the temple *Pentecostal Unida Internacional*, the goal of this radio station has been “changing lives”, according to Eduardo Calambas, one of its volunteer members. According to Mr. Calambas, “changing lives” means to attract, work with, and help the youth, through the teaching of the bible, to overcome problems that they commonly endure, such as alcoholism, drug addiction, single motherhood, and domestic violence.

Unlike Srío Wam, *Pentecostal Stereo* was not initially supported by any transnational missionary organization. Rather, this radio station started with a small amount of funding collected among the members of the religious organization. With that small funding, they rented a microphone, built an artisan antenna, and bought a low power transmitter that only provided a signal to few hundred meters around. During the first months, the members of the temple launched different fundraising events, or *siembras*, in which non-evangelicals and evangelicals from different areas through the Cauca contributed money for the radio station. They also participated and collected some funding at the regional congress of the radical pro-Israel evangelical conservative *Confederacion Iberoamericana de Comunicadores y Medios Masivos Cristianos*, COICOM, in Cali. Due to internal and external support, *Pentecostal Stereo* has been able to acquire a transmission capable of covering a very important area of the territory

as well as other municipalities from Cauca, new computers and microphones, and a special equipment that allows broadcasting from outside of their studios – equipment that not even the cabildo’s State and NGO supported radio station has. Nowadays, they plan to place the transmission antenna at one of the highest peaks at Guambia in order to strengthen their signal.

By listening to the pride with which the members of the *Pentecostal Unida Internacional* talk about their communication project, it is notable that the expansion of the radio station is not only motivated by the desire of having a more powerful medium to broadcast biblical preaching and music. They also do it because *Pentecostal Stereo* itself has become a manifestation of the growth and empowerment that has resulted from their religious practices. For instance, the success of this radio station and other projects, such as a growing organic chicken farm, have contributed to the good name of evangelical institutions among the Misak. On one occasion, a non-evangelical Misak I interviewed – and who preferred to remain anonymous – commented to me about the rumors that some evangelical organizations were collecting money to launch all sorts of services, from a television channel to health care facilities. This person, as well as many others I informally asked about these projects, assured that “If the evangelicals want, they can do it. These people are very organized and have connection with wealthy organizations”⁹².

⁹² “si los evangelicos quieren, lo hacen. Esa gente es muy organizada y conocen muchas fundaciones con plata”.

Despite their evangelical and Pentecostal affiliation, the media practitioners of the Misak evangelical radio stations recognize and accept the legitimacy of the cabildo's authority. For instance, Eduardo Calambas states that one of the duties of an evangelical Misak is to actively participate in the cabildo – electing and being elected for any unpaid service position within the community. The main reason, according to him, is that they live in the Misak territory, thus they have the obligation of participating in these community actions. The evangelical participation is not only a result of voluntary participation. In fact, evangelicals are often elected and supported by non-evangelicals for some specific positions. The University of Valle's Professor Javier Fayat, an academic who has worked for more than thirty years with the Misak people, called my attention to the fact that evangelicals are frequently elected for leading the Misak *Programa de Justicia*. More research is needed to know the correlation between evangelical affiliation and participation in this program. My hypothesis is that evangelicals are preferred for this program, not only because they constantly engage with problems the *Programa de Justicia* deals with, such as infidelity, domestic abuse, drug addiction, and alcoholism, but also because the Misak people relate evangelical affiliation with having higher ethical standards. This hypothesis came up through some of the interviews I carried out, but more information is necessary to state it as an assertion.

Another reason why the evangelical media practitioners support the figure of the cabildo is because the survival of these radio stations depends on the authority of these local institutions. Since they do not possess any sort of operation licenses, they claim

that the territorial autonomy proclaimed by the 1991 Colombian Constitution for indigenous people provides them the right to broadcast. These radio stations have had some difficulties with the law. For instance, the Misak authorities had to intervene once when the national regulatory authorities threatened with an intervention against Srío Wam for disrupting the signal of a private radio station (interview Jeremias Tunubala).

The lack of licenses of evangelical radio stations has always been a contentious topic. Some voices from indigenous organizations have manifested the necessity of shutting down these radio stations, considering them as illegal threats to indigenous cultures. Despite their illegality, however, the State has supported some of these radio projects as a strategy for political cooptation. For instance, in 2014, less than 50 kilometers away from Guambia, in the area of San Antonio, in the municipality of Morales, Cauca, the Misak settlers received economic and technical support from the Colombian military forces to found the evangelical radio station *Impacto Stereo*. This was part of a campaign of the military forces to ease their relationship with and gain support from populations settled in areas affected by armed conflict. As part of the supporting agreement, this radio station's staff appeared in a four minute video campaign where they express their gratitude to the military for their support (FMC, 2014). This situation created tensions and fractures within the Misak community. On one hand, some Misaks rejected the military support and the propaganda campaign, considering it an unnecessary and dangerous involvement in the conflict between the military and the guerillas. On the other hand, other Misaks considered positive the involvement of the military in this type of campaigns. Some of them even attempted to

find economic support for their own productive and developmental projects from the Colombian Ministry of Defense. The conflict between these parties increased when the cabildo decided to reject and forbid any sort of support from the military within Guambia. What is really ironic here is that the military forces ended up supporting an illegal radio station, fostering, one more time, a culture of illegality in a context where the legitimacy of the State is very low.

Evangelical radio programming

The broadcasting program of these radio stations relies heavily on music, some preaching, and some broadcasting of news programs, and local religious events. In relation to music, this is not limited to the traditional gospel music. They also broadcast songs with evangelical messages in all sorts of genres, such as pop, vallenato, salsa, cumbia, and carranguera. Some of this music is locally produced. Pentecostal Stereo, for instance, has an archive of more than 500 hundred songs in Misak's language *Namuy Wuam*. More than 300 hundred of these songs have been produced by Jorge Eduardo Sanchez, a Misak musician and music producer who, with the support of various international missionary groups from Canada and the United States, founded a small producer of evangelical music called *GEDAR Producciones* (Eduardo interview). This evidences the strong relationship between evangelical practices and the current blooming musicians and musical productions at Guambia.

As mentioned before, frequent listeners to these radio stations, some of them no evangelicals, find this music hopeful especially in moments of crisis. This is the case of

Rosa Maria Montano, the Misak student I have had the opportunity to work with the most since my arrival to Guambia. Since an early age, she has suffered from *osteogenesis imperfecta*, or brittle bone disease, a very strange sickness that affects the growth and strength of the bones. Due the lack of knowledge of her parents about this sickness, she endured a very hard childhood and adolescence, full of isolation, enclosure, and abuse. According to her, evangelical radio became one of her few sources of hope and companionship during these difficult years:

It was like someone talking to me and giving me advice. There were songs that, when I had troubles, were as if someone was talking. When I felt bad, it was like a hope, a council, to alleviate suffering⁹³ (Rosa interview).

Years later, motivated by her mother who became evangelical seeking for help to confront her difficult relation with Rosa's father, Rosa became an active member of two evangelical religious organizations, first a non-Misak one in Silvia and another in the Misak area of *Campana*, where she learned to play piano, drums, and guitar and she received classes on public speaking and singing. Although she left evangelism because it contradicts many of the traditional ideas of the Misak spiritually she actively practices, Rosa continues listening these evangelical radio stations in moments of dreariness (Rosa interview).

In relation to preaching, these radio stations play audios produced by local pastors as well as external national and international preachers. These preaches are

⁹³Era como si alguien me hablara y me diera consejos. Hay habían músicas que cuando uno estaba como con problemas, era como si alguien le hablara. Cuando me sentía mal, eso era como una esperanza, un consejo, para aliviar el sufrimiento.

strongly influenced by the controversial Theology of Prosperity, a Neo-Pentecostal (NP) doctrine that has gained popularity since the 1980 through Latin America. This evangelical doctrine, very criticized by the Catholics as well as evangelical traditionalist, seeks to attract followers from destitute areas by promising an improvement in people's material conditions of life through self-entrepreneurship and free market practices (Ocaña, 2004: 172).

As an example of the preaching related to money, in the program *Esperanza Para Vivir*, broadcasted in April 18, 2015, a preacher from the neighbor city of Popayan – who was not introduced – discussed some of the required attitudes that true Christians need to succeed. Her preaching was full of analogies between a successful spiritual life and entrepreneurship. She started her preaching with “The Parable of the Bag of Gold” (Matthew 25:14-30). This biblical passage talks about how a wealthy man, who was going to begin in a long journey, entrusted his wealth to three of his servants: five bags of gold to the first, two to the second, and one to the third. The first one put his money to work and gained another five. The second man did the same obtaining other two. Meanwhile, the third dug a hole and buried his master's gold. On his return, the master congratulated euphorically the first two productive man, while he reproached the laziness and evilness of the third, dispossessing him from the gold, and giving it to the first man.

Using very simple language, the preacher explains that the master congratulates the initiative of the first two men, who took the risk and invested the money received, obtaining gains and the grace of their master:

Here, the master congratulates the two people who won 100%. With those few talents, they did something (...). But there was one that did not invest, he gain nothing, he did not steal the money, but did nothing.⁹⁴

And the preacher adds: “Sometimes this is what happens, we come up with excuses and we seeks scapegoats for things we are not able to do. It is not for our incapacity, but because we do not want to do them, so we find scapegoats!”⁹⁵ Here, the preacher portrays material success as a simple consequence of personal effort. Social and economic constraints that cannot be controlled by individuals are not mentioned at all.

Later, the preacher announces that her talk would be about talent and money. She contextualizes this discussion with a coming *siembra* event at this religious congregation –the specific name is not disclosed. According to her:

Those who have had the opportunity to plant know that worship is a blessing. Many sow, so want to harvest the next day. The fact of being here today, sitting and blessed, that's a blessing! That is to collect a crop we have done. But we are impatient, like when we sow a little plant and we want the next day to flourish. Everything has a process, God gives us everything in at the right time. So if we have planted and have not received the harvest we are waiting for, that is in the hands of the Lord, and the Lord never forgets. Because we are going to talk about money, then I want to recount what trade is in general (...)⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Aquí, el amo felicita a las dos personas, al que gano el 100%. Con esos pocos talentos, ellos hicieron algo (...). Pero hubo uno de ellos que no invirtió, no gano nada, él no se robó el dinero, pero no hizo nada.

⁹⁵ “a veces nos pasa eso, damos excusas y buscamos culpables para las cosas que no somos capaces de hacer. No por nuestra incapacidad sino porque no las queremos hacer y buscamos culpables!”

⁹⁶ Los que hemos tenido la oportunidad de sembrar sabemos que ese culto es de bendición. Muchos sembramos y queremos la cosecha al día siguiente, pero el hecho de estar hoy aquí, sentados y bendecidos, eso es una bendición. Muchos sembramos y queremos la cosecha al día siguiente, pero el hecho de estar aquí, sentados, con salud, bien vestidos, eso es una bendición. Eso es recoger una siembra que hemos hecho. Y nosotros somos impacientes, como cuando sembramos una matica y queremos que al otro día ya florezca. Todo tiene un proceso, y el señor nos trata, él nos da todo en a su tiempo. Entonces si hemos sembrado y no hemos recibido la cosecha que estamos esperando, eso ya

As we can see in the previous transcript, the preacher employs a very simplistic language to promote money donations, or *siembras*, for her temple. The same preacher adds:

Being a business partner with God involves acquiring, by choice, a commitment of cooperation with God's plan. The more stock we have, the more benefits we will get. These stock of the Kingdom of Heaven gives us some rights and we generate some obligations. What is our right when we partner with the Kingdom of Heaven? We are entitled to be called "children of God", we can stand before the throne of grace, we have the right to give blessings to God, and we have the most important right, brothers, to obtain salvation. This big right makes us to support, to be members of the kingdom of heaven. What are our obligations, brothers? One of the obligations is to love God above all things, to be truthful to the word of God, to do what is just and right in front of God, to persevere in prayer, to spread his word, and many more that you know more than me. Then the Kingdom of Heaven is also a business, a thriving business, a lucrative business, an interesting business. We become partners with God, and he blesses us in many ways. We work for the Kingdom of Heaven and he blesses us greatly. Heaven, brothers, is open and we have to associate the Kingdom of Heaven, and it does not cost us much. To become a member of the Kingdom of Heaven, we just have to have the will, the desire, which said the sister, I want to serve, I want to work, and I want to be in permanent contact with the Lord. That is what is only needed to work for the Kingdom of Heaven. But as we need financial blesses in here in earth, because money is important, that money cannot buy you happiness, ummm, not! You should ask to a poor beggar on the street if he is happy! "If I had money, I would be happier." We cannot live without money, everything is related to purchasing and selling. We cannot get up without having something to throw into the pot, as they say, we have to work for that and that is why money is important. One sometimes hears that money cannot buy you happiness, but it contributes quite a lot, right?⁹⁷

está en manos del señor, y el señor nunca olvida. Como vamos a hablar del dinero, entonces quiero hacer un recuento de lo que es el comercio en general (...).

⁹⁷ Ser socio de Dios implica adquirir, por voluntad propia, acciones que representan un compromiso a colaborar con el proyecto de Dios. Entre más acciones tengamos, más beneficios vamos a obtener. Esas acciones del Reino de los Cielos nos dan unos derechos y nos generan unas obligaciones. ¿A que

In the previous paragraph, we can find several allusions to the supposed relationship between monetary contributions and salvation. According to the preacher, people acquire the right to be saved by contributing, or investing, in her temple. Therefore, the relationship between believers and God is limited to a monetary transaction. There is not space for mistaking her message: it is clear that, when she is talking about investing and receiving, she is talking about giving money to her religious congregation. The “mandates” of this temple are astonishingly simplistic even when they are compared with the laws of traditional religious churches, which include all sorts of issues unrelated to monetary transactions. Due to the simplicity of their religious standards, their instability and constant reorganization resulted in conflicts with old allies, their lack of a strong theological tradition, and their for-profit orientation, these religious congregations are not considered by theologians and academics of religion as churches (Urbina, 2008).

tenemos derecho cuando nos asociamos con el Reino de los Cielos? Tenemos derecho a ser llamados “hijos de Dios”, podemos presentarnos ante el trono de la gracia, tenemos derecho a hacerle bendiciones al padre, tenemos el derecho más importante, hermanos, a obtener la salvación. Ese es un derecho grande que nos genera el aportar, el ser socios del reino de los cielos. ¿Cuáles obligaciones nos nacen, hermanos? Una de las obligaciones es amar a Dios sobre todas las cosas, ser fieles a su palabra, hacer lo justo y recto enfrente de Dios, perseverar en oración, compartir las promesas, compartir su palabra, y muchas más que ustedes saben más que yo. Entonces el Reino de los Cielos es también un negocio, un negocio pujante, un negocio lucrativo, un negocio interesante. Nos hacemos socios de Dios, y él nos bendice de muchas formas. Trabajamos para el Reino de los Cielos y él nos bendice de gran manera. Los cielos, hermanos, están abiertos y por eso tenemos que asociarnos el Reino de los Cielos, y no nos cuesta mucho. Para ser socio del Reino de los Cielos, solo tenemos que tener la voluntad, el deseo, lo que decía la hermana, quiero servirle, quiero trabajar, quiero estar en permanente contacto con el Señor, eso solamente se necesita para trabajar en el reino de los cielos. Pero como nosotros en el reino terrenal necesitamos bendiciones económicas, porque el dinero es importante, eso que el dinero no te da la felicidad, ummm, no se! porque uno le pregunta a un pobre mendigo en la calle ¿y usted es feliz? “si tuviera plata sería más feliz”. No podemos vivir sin el dinero, todo está relacionado con el comprar con el vender. Nosotros no podemos levantarnos sin tener algo que echarle a la olla, como dicen, tenemos que trabajar para eso y por eso el dinero es importante. Uno a veces escucha que el dinero no te da la felicidad, oye pero contribuye bastante, ¿no?

Not all preaching broadcasted on these radio stations has such an explicit link between collecting money and spiritual salvation, such as the one presented before. For instance, in February 8, 2015, *Srno Wam* broadcasted a Luis Palau's radio program where he promoted household's spending control techniques:

I have a letter with a different theme. He says, 'Mr. Palau, I do not earn much, but enough to live well. However, each time it reaches the end of the month I am short of money. I have debts and do not know how to control myself. You seem to understand these things, please help me.' Well, sir, we've all been through that struggle. It seems that the more or little money you have it is harder to reach the end of the month. And your wife begs you please a few pennies more, it is not enough to cover everything one dreams. (...). The control of money, is part of self-control. If you can control yourself greatly, you can control the money that God placed in your hands. On the other hand, for those who are married, we have to share the burden of self-control and family control with our wives, or husbands. We must start with something. The first step, I've taken control of my money by writing down how much I receive and how much I spend. I learned it by watching my own mother when I was a child. You have to get used to carry a notebook and keep track of inputs and outputs, or as it is technically said, income and expenditures. That's the first step. I remember, my grandmother, my grandmother who is now with God, thank the Lord, my grandmother always had a book, and when she went shopping always writing down the pennies she spent for bread and sugar, and when she sent me shopping, I had to bring penny by penny, because my grandmother wanted to write it all. Obviously my grandmother, my mother learned it from my grandmother, and I learned it from observation. Now the first step, however, and with this I finish for today and I will retake the topic tomorrow, it is very important to recognize that all our profits comes from the hand of God. Everything we receive, whether little or much, according to our estimates, came from the hand of our God. And what we receive from your own hand needs to be return it to him. It is important to start talking about how to handle money, as you ask me in your letter, sir, the first step is to thank God for what we have. Tomorrow, step two.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Tengo una carta con un tema distinto. Me dice: 'señor Palau, no gano mucho, pero si lo suficiente para vivir bien. Sin embargo, cada vez que llega el fin del mes me encuentro corto de dinero. Tengo deudas y no sé cómo controlarme. Usted parece que entiende estas cosas, por favor, ayúdame.' Bueno,

Palau presents, in a very articulated yet simple way, a useful strategy to have control over the home spending. According to him, he learned from his mother to monitor and control all the household spending by writing all money spent. To finish his narrative, he assures that the most important thing to remember that all money received, for little or much, is a manifestation of God's grace. Again, therefore, money is the mediator between Christians and God according to Palau's narrative. This money, of course, need to circulate: "Y lo que recibimos de su propia mano, se lo devolvemos"⁹⁹. By stating the necessity of returning the money, Palau implies the necessity to contribute to the evangelical cause. Despite the softness of Palau's message, he is still expressing the idea that good Christianity is closely related to economic prosperity.

As Urbina (2008) explains, NP carries dramatic theatrical shows that involve acting, preaching, and music. Since all this is diffused by television and radio, Piedra

caballero, todos hemos pasado por esa lucha. Pareciera que por más dinero que uno tenga, o por poco que tenga, llega el fin de mes y la señora le está rogando que por favor unos centavitos más, que no se alcanza a cubrir todo lo que uno sueña. (...). El control del dinero, es parte del control propio. Si usted se puede controlar a sí mismo, en gran manera se puede controlar el dinero que Dios allá puesto en sus manos. Por otro lado, para los que somos personas casadas, ya entonces toca compartir la carga con la esposa de uno, o el marido según el caso, por lo tanto el control propio y el control familiar. Hay que empezar por lo primero, cierto. El primer paso que yo he dado en el control de mi dinero es llevar, por escrito, cuanto recibo y cuanto gasto. Yo lo aprendí viendo a mi propia madre cuando era un niño. Usted tiene que acostumbrarse a llevar una libreta y a llevar un registro, como se dice técnicamente, de ingresos y egresos, ósea de entradas y salidas. Ese es el primer paso, digamos, práctico. Me acuerdo, mi abuelita, mi abuelita que ya está con Dios, gracias al señor, mi abuelita siempre tenía una libreta, y cuando iba de compras siempre anotando los centavitos que gastaba con pan y con azúcar, y cuando me mandaba de compras a mí, yo tenía que traer los centavos al centavo, porque mi abuela quería ponerlo por escrito todo. Obviamente de mi abuela, lo aprendió mi madre y luego, por observación, lo aprendí yo. Ahora bien, el primer paso, sin embargo, y con esto termino por hoy, y mañana levanto el tema de nuevo, porque es muy importante para cada día de nosotros, el primer paso es reconocer que todas nuestras ganancias, sean muchas o sean pocas, vienen de la mano de Dios. Todo lo que recibimos, sea poco o mucho, según nuestra estimación, viene de la mano de nuestro Dios. Y lo que recibimos de su propia mano, se lo devolvemos. Es importante al comenzar a hablar de cómo manejamos el dinero, como usted me pregunta en su carta, señor, el primer paso es gracias a Dios por lo que tenemos. Mañana, paso dos.

⁹⁹ "and what we received from his hand, we would return it".

(2004) considers Neo-Pentecostalism as a mass-media phenomenon. These mass media spectacles attempt to sell more than just the idea of the relationship between money and salvation (6). For instance, they portray members of these evangelical congregations as freedom warriors persecuted by the tyranny of the evil Catholic Church. As a compensation for this cruel persecution and suffering, the truly committed Christians acquired the capacity of being healed and healing (Urbina, 2008:6).

A very good example of all this is the preaching broadcasted by Srío Wam on 5/6/2016. In this preaching, a Guatemalan pastor – whose name is not disclosed – explains how and why he converted from a Catholic priest to an evangelical pastor. Employing a very aggressive tone, he explained that he converted after engaging in all sorts of illegal actions against the members of the evangelical groups, such as commanding a group of gang members to destroy evangelical property, beat, and kill evangelical pastors. All this for stopping them to engage in their evangelical work. According to his narrative, one day, when he was a Catholic priest, after a service, he called the leader of 5 gangs – who were Catholic as well:

I need that the day the Protestants go to celebrate their campaign (...) YOU WILL GRAB THE SHEPHERD FROM THE NECK OF HIS SHIRT AND YOU WILL DRAG HIM AT LEAST five blocks. Do not worry, if you end in jail, I will take you out. YOU ARE GOING TO GRAB HIM BETWEEN FOUR MEN AND YOU ARE GOING TO HIT HIM UNTIL, at least, you break his bones. THEN YOU'LL GRAB THAT PASTOR'S WIFE FROM HER HAIR AND OTHER GROUP WILL BREAK ALL THEIR INSTRUMENTS. They will be 15 or 20 people because evangelicals have enough people, but if you can BREAK THEIR INSTRUMENTS ON THEIR HEAD. THEN, BREAK THE ELECTRIC LIGHTING, but until you have done all. I'll talk to the head of the electricity company so there is no light in about five

blocks. Let's see if it is true that evangelicals can do their campaign.¹⁰⁰

According to his testimony, he was part of a complex network of Catholic corruption in the town he served as a priest. The town's mayor and the police commandant, who were also Catholics, supported hypocritically evangelical events just for political interest. This network was also made up by the town's drug traffickers, cheaters, wizards, men who fornicate, dancers, and members of the gangs. In addition, he assures that 95 percent of the Catholic priest are homosexuals.

After engaging in all sorts of evil actions against the evangelicals, this converted pastor assures that his health rapidly deteriorated. Every week he developed a new disease: migraine; cholesterol; uric acid; high pressure; pathologic anxiety; and finally diabetes. These sickness, he assures, were manifestation of God punishment. While his health was deteriorating, he started dreaming of the presence of the "real" God from the "true" religion. In one of this dreams, the real God said to him:

You have to call my shepherd, how much damage you did to him. But, it is necessary he prays for you, then you will be healed! When I woke up I said: no, bringing that evangelical Pastor? Not! (...) There are three problems, 1. What a shame! That man must be mad at me, he must hate me for everything that I did. 2. If I tell the vestry to bring it, he can denounce me, and these people would kill me

¹⁰⁰ Necesito que el día que salgan los protestantes salgan a celebrar su campaña (...) ME VAS A AGARRAR ESE PASTOR DEL CUELLO DE LA CAMISA Y ME LO VAS A ARRASTRAR POR LO MENOS UNAS CINCO CUADRAS, no te preocupes, si te van a meter a la cárcel yo te saco. Y ME LO VAS A AGARRAR ENTRE 4 HOMBRES, Y ME LE VAS A IR DANDO HASTA QUE, por lo menos, se le quiebren los huesos. LUEGO LE VAS A AGARRAR LA ESPOSA DE ESE PASTOR, LA VAS A AGARRAR DEL CABELLO, OTRO GRUPO, Y QUE LA ARRASTREN DE IGUAL MANERA. LUEGO LES VAS A QUEBRAR TODOS LOS INSTRUMENTOS, van a ser 15 o 20 porque tienen suficientes personas, Y SI PUEDEN QUIEBRENSELOS EN LA CABEZA. LUEGO VAN A QUEBRAR EL ALUMBRADO ELECTRICO, pero hasta que hayan hecho todo. Y luego yo voy a hablar con el jefe de la empresa eléctrica para que en unas cinco cuadras no haya luz, a ver si es cierto que los evangélicos vayan a hacer la campaña.

faster [the members of the Catholic Church] (...). 3. If I tell to the cooker? (...) No, so I'll die.¹⁰¹

After a very painful agony, he staring dying. He closed his eyes and saw a big billboard where he could see all bad things he did to the evangelicals:

And I begin to watch a billboard, showing all the wrong I did to the Christians, I have not told anything. It is so much that I have not even told you the one percent.¹⁰²

Among these horrible things, he commanded someone to break the pastor's head with a bottle of beer because he refused to drink it – evangelicals promote teetotalism: “it showed when I broke a bottle of beer on a Sheppard's head, because he did not want to drink it”¹⁰³. Finally, this converted pastor had three heart attacks and died. Once he was dead, he meet Jesus, who told him:

‘YOU ARE A USEFUL TOOL FOR ME, BECAUSE I WILL USE YOU TO TEACH MANY CATHOLICS AND TO SOME THAT SAY THAT ARE CHRISTIANS. YOU ARE GOING TO PREACH WHERE NOT EVERYONE GO BECAUSE MANY WALK FOR THE MONEY, YOU WILL GO THERE.’ AND I CRIED! And he showed me the world (...). HE STARTED GRASP ME AND SAID: ‘AY COLOMBIA.’ And he kept saying, ‘AY HAITI’ – I went there to preach the past year. AND HE SHOWED ME THE ENTIRE THE WORLD (...). I cried and I cried. And he said, 'you have to go where my shepherd, the one you DID MUCH DAMAGE, TO ASK FOR FORGIVENESS!’¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ “Tienes que mandar a llamar mi ciervo, que TANTO daño le hiciste. Porque es necesario que ore por ti, porque vas a ser sanado. Cuando yo desperté dije: ¿no, mandar a traer este Pastor? ¡No! (...) Hay tres problemas, 1. ¡Qué vergüenza! Ese hombre debe estar enojado conmigo, me debe odiar, con todo lo que yo le hice. 2. Si le digo al sacrista que lo traiga, me puede denunciar, y más rápido me puede matar esta gente [los miembros de la iglesia Católica] (...). 3. ¿Si le digo a la que prepara los alimentos? (...) no, mejor me voy a morir”.

¹⁰² “Y comienzo a ver una gran cinta, que pasaba, donde esa cinta estaba todo lo malo que yo le hacía a los Cristianos, que no le he contado nada. Es tanto que ni el uno por ciento le he contado”.

¹⁰³ “Hay decía cuando le mande a quebrar un envase de cerveza a un pastor en la cabeza, porque le dije que si no se la tomaba se la quebraran en la cabeza”.

¹⁰⁴ INSTRUMENTO UTIL ME ERES, PORQUE YO TE VOY A USAR PARA QUE LE ENSEÑES A MUCHOS CATOLICOS Y A ALGUNOS QUE DICEN SER CRISTIANOS. VAS A IR A PREDICAR DONDE NO CUALQUIERA PUEDE IR PORQUE MUCHOS CAMINAN POR EL DINERO. AHÍ VAS A IR, ¡Y YO LLORABA!, y me mostro el mundo (...). Y ME COMIENZA A

After this experience with Jesus, he resurrected and asked the pastor for forgiveness. Meanwhile, the Catholic people who witnessed the miracle also converted to evangelical Protestantism.

Two of the most impressive features of this preaching are the violent language and the narcissism of the narrator. In addition to saying that he commanded people to assassinate evangelicals in his condition of priest and that Jesus chose him as tool for worldwide evangelization, he later states that, his father, his family, and even the Catholic Pope commanded to kill him. After he received baptism from the evangelical pastor:

I BEGAN TO BE HARRASED INTENSILY IN GUATEMALA. And I said, what should I do? The called me to excommunicate me. When I had to go to the audience was terrible for me. They wanted me to give up being a Protestant, because it was not their God who had healed me, it was the Virgin Mary! What a lie, NO, told them, do whatever you WANT TO ME! (...). The problem is that my parents lived in El Salvador, and I came to their place. Very happy, I arrive with my suitcase, and my father told me: 'bastard, I do not want to see you here', he said to me, 'TODAY YOU HAVE TO DECIDE BECAUSE YOU ARE DESAPPOINTING US'. 'Look at your mother', he told me, 'she is sick for yourself, she is close to a stroke'. You have to decide, THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND YOUR MOTHER OR THE PROTESTANTS, DECIDE. Look how sick you mother is'. One of the nephews of my father was in the military, and when I said I CHOOSE TO FOLLOW MY CHRISTIANS BOTHERS, he told me, 'I DO NOT WANT TO SEE YOU NEVER AGAIN', and he threw my suitcase to the street, and he commanded people to beat me, my cousin did it and I felt on the street. They started beating me on the street, smashing my head. (...) I was afraid for my safety, because my father said he would pay 15 assassins because he rather to see me dead. (...) I

AGARRAR Y ME DICE: "AY COLOMBIA", Y ME DECIA, "AY HAITI". Fui a predicar el año pasado allá. Y ME COMIENZA A MOSTRAR EL MUNDO ENTERO (...). Yo lloraba y yo gritaba. Y me dijo, 'tienes que ir a donde mi ciervo, QUE TANTO DAÑO LE HICISTE, A PERDIERLE PERDON!'

was chased on the buses to kill me. (...) Then I started to fast and to pray. (...) I wrote a book that sells well in the United States titled *Christian, Defend Your Faith*, where I appear embracing the Pope John Paul II. The pastor told me, ‘send a copy to the pope’, and I sent it, and the pope order to kill me. Hey, brother, I have been so harassed by the Catholic Church, 7 YEARS!¹⁰⁵

According to Urbina (2008), this type of egomania is a regular feature in NP’s performances. For instance, Hagin, one of the pioneers of Theology of Prosperity, assured that he constantly was consulted by God about how to resolve the shortage of preachers worldwide (Urbina, 26: 2008). Urbina states that this rhetoric is used to convince the auditorium about the role of the preacher as the chosen prophet (26). More studies on Christianity within the Misak community are needed to understand the penetration of this type of discourses among the evangelical Misak.

What it is clear is that the relationship between evangelical preaching – alive or via radio – and healing is very ingrained within the Misak society. Frequently, the Misak evangelical radio stations broadcast announcements and testimonies on their healing

¹⁰⁵ COMENCE A SER PERSEGUIDO EN GUATEMALA, GRANDEMENTE. Y digo, yo, ahora que hago. Me llamaban para descomulgarme. Cuando me tocaba ir a las audiencias, eso era terrible para mí. Querían que yo renunciara a ser protestante, porque no era el Dios de ellos que me había sanado, era la virgen. ¡Mira que mentira, NO, les decía, HAGAN LO QUE QUIERAN HACER CONMIGO! (...). Cuando el problema es que mis padres vivían en el Salvador, y llego donde ellos. Bien contento, llego con mi maleta, y mi padre me dice: ‘desgraciado, NO TE QUIERO VOLVER A VER AQUÍ’, me dice, ‘HOY TIENES QUE DECIDIR PORQUE NOS ANDAS DEFRAUDANDO’. ‘Mira a tu madre’, me dice, ‘está enferma por ti, está por darle un derrame cerebral. Tienes que decidir, LA IGLESIA CATOLICA, TU MADRE, O LOS PROTESTANTES, DECIDETE. Mira como esta de enferma.’ Uno de los sobrinos de mi padre era militar, y cuando yo le dije: YO DECIDO POR SEGUIR A CRISTO Y A MIS HERMANOS CRISTIANOS, y me dijo ‘NO TE QUIERO VER JAMAS’ y hay mismo me tiro la maleta para afuera, y ordeno que me golpearan, y mi primo se levantó me dio y caí al suelo. Y comenzaron a golpearme en la calle, la cabeza me la hicieron pedazos. (...) Yo sentía miedo por mi seguridad, porque mi padre dijo que le iba a pagar a 15 sicarios porque prefería verme muerto. (...) A mí me perseguían en los buses para matarme. (...) Entonces yo me puse a ayunar y a orar. (...) Escribí un libro que se vende mucho en Estados Unidos que se llama “Cristiano, Defiende tu Fe”, donde yo aparezco abrazado con el Papa Juan Pablo Segundo. El pastor me dijo, ‘mánde uno al Papa’, y se lo mande, y me mando a matar. Oye, hermano, YO HE SIDO PERSEGUIDO POR LA IGLESIA CATOLICA, ¡7 AÑOS!

power. For instance, Sro Wam promoted its *Siembra 2015* broadcasting anonymous testimonies of people who have donated money to the radio station as a symbol of gratitude for the received health benefits. This motivated me to ask the Misak about their opinion and experiences around healing. As a response, I have found that many people manifested their belief that the evangelical temples and radio stations serve as curative instruments. For instance, Javier Morales, a member of the *Iglesia Pentecostal Unida Internacional*, a former volunteer at *Pentecostal Stereo*, and former member of *Namuy Wam*, told me about some healing cases, including his own.

In 2013, Javier and his family decided to move to Bogota, seeking new labor opportunities. After few days working as a delivery person, one box hit his right leg causing a painless small cut. Through the days, he started to developed swelling and pain, which both grew up to the point he could not walk anymore. At the moment he received medical assistance, his leg was in severe damage as a result of a very advanced cellulitis infection. After two surgeries and several months of convalesce, Javier and his family returned to Guambia.

Once they arrived, Javier, his wife and his daughter ended up living with Javier's family. Javier's recovery was not easy, but after three months of helplessness and very dissatisfying medical reports, he was finally able to walk again. According to Javier, the encouragement to stand up and move came from the prayers from members of his church at his house and his constant attention to *Pentecostal Stereo*. Now, he considers that his case is a miracle, and he owns his health to God:

After 3 months of therapy, I could walk. And the prayer every day, the shepherds came to my house and everything. Pastors, brothers,

visited me from many places, and always with prayer. I had to be part of it, so God would help me. That's why I trusted God because, if it were not for God, I think I was not alive, because I think he was the one who made me the miracle. I tried another thing, but it did not help, so there was only therapy and prayer.¹⁰⁶

But, this is not the only miracle to which Javier gives testimony. He also explains the case of one member of his religious congregation who is blinded, and developed seven sicknesses that included heart and lung problems, from being exposed to poisoned soil. Javier states that, after many sections of prayers and fasts, this person was able to leave the hospital, recover, and become an active member of his religious community.

Conclusion

More than presenting conclusive arguments about evangelism and evangelical radio in Guambia, this chapter presents an exploratory approach to this large and barely explored case. In relation to evangelism, we could see how evangelism in Guambia has gone through a very dynamic process of transformation, plenty of nuances and contradictions. From being led by external missionaries of powerful organizations, such as the Christian Missionary Alliance, evangelism became fragmented into several evangelical organizations. From being an institution that fostered actions of resistance against the remainders of the Catholic colonial power, evangelism was transformed into a religious dogma that promotes free market and individual empowerment. From

¹⁰⁶ “Después de 3 meses de terapia pude caminar. Y eso que la oración todos los días, los pastores llegaban a mi casa y todo. Los pastores, los hermanos, me visitaban de muchas partes, y siempre con la oración. Yo tuve que ser parte de eso para que Dios me ayudara. Es por eso que confié en Dios porque si no fuera por Dios yo creo que no estuviera porque, porque yo creo que él fue el que hizo el milagro, porque no hice otro remedio porque no había otro remedio, solo había terapia y oración”.

being a very strict religious dogma, it became transformed into different localized religious practices that blend, invigorate, but also reject, Misak traditions.

In relation to community media theory, this chapter problematizes the simplicity of the views on evangelical radio provided by Gumucio Dragon, one of the few community media theorists who has dared to state something about evangelical radio stations. This chapter rejects the dichotomy he proposes between the “good” radio stations inspired by Theology of Liberation and “bad” evangelical radio stations. The case of evangelical radio stations, and evangelism itself, is shown to have more nuances. In the specific case of Guambia, we see how the Misak evangelical organizations provide relief, in terms of personal empowerment and support networks, to victims of all sorts of physical and physiological violence, who are overwhelmingly women. This is not a small issue. In fact, it is not uncommon to hear about suicides and attempts to commit suicides in the community. There is not much research on this matter; however, it is evident that the Misak, as well as members of other historically excluded societies, does not have access to mental care. This is highly problematic considering the high levels of violence, destruction, and exclusion they have endured. For this reason, the role of evangelical radio stations as diffusor of hope – regardless its individualistic orientation – is very important.

Another point in favor of evangelical radios is their role in promoting local artists and self-produced music. In moments when culture is highly disinvested, it is very valuable to have resources for the production and diffusion of locally produced

music. An example is the work of Jorge Eduardo Sanchez, who has produced and recorded more than 300 songs from Misak artists.

Evangelical radio stations have also become manifestations of growth and empowerment resulting from evangelical practices. As the preachers cited in this chapter show, it is evident that evangelism promotes individually oriented practices and problematic spiritual relations based, not in solidarity, empathy or compassion, but in a monetary transaction between people and God. It is also true that these discourses promote structures of domination and resistance against any attempt of structural change. However, people also find positive value in encountering institutions organized by members of the community that achieve goals, such as putting on air and expanding their own radio stations through communitarian work. It would be important to do deep research on the role of the ethic evangelical organizations as instruments for individual empowerment within these communities.

Another important aspect of these evangelical radio stations is their role as instruments for social control. In Guambia, the *cabildo* – which is composed of less than 200 people – needs to organize education, health, sanitation, production, justice, environment, etc. for more than 16 thousand people. Due to the community sizes, the scarcity of economic resources and training, the *cabildo* is just overwhelmed with work. Evangelical radios, and evangelism in general, contributes to the control population, by paying attention to alcoholism, drug addiction and domestic violence.

This could be a relief for the *cabildo*, but it is still problematic. As we could see in the evolution of evangelism, as well as the consolidation of the Catholic Church in

indigenous territories after independency, religious institutions acquired power within indigenous territories through providing services, such as education and health, which the State, and the local indigenous authorities do not have the capacity to provide. The pivotal role of this new Pentecostalism, influenced by the Theology of Prosperity, could give these evangelical institutions enough power to impose, for instance, conservative educational plans, as it is happening at the area of Puente Real. This is a very interesting if it is contrasted with the idea of autonomy promoted by indigenous organizations. How can the idea of indigenous autonomy be defined when, as these articles shows, these local organizations need to aid from external institutions? Is the lack of the State capacity to provide services undermining indigenous authority and systems of thought by leaving this to private entities with evangelical interests?

As it is possible to grasp from testimonies of evangelicals and non-evangelicals from the Misak community one of the ideas that make possible the coexistence between followers of different religions is the figure of autonomic authority. But, as the story of evangelism shows, ideas and social relations rapidly become transformed. The unity between these two fractions is, definitely, one of the many challenges the Misak people is, and would, face in this era of inclusion.

Chapter 5

Institutional Bureaucratization and Indigenous Media Law

Since 2008 when I started researching media and indigenous organizations, I have witnessed how national and regional indigenous organizations, especially National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia, ONIC) and the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca (Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca, CRIC) have progressively become involved in the topic of communication. Their involvement with this topic reached a peak in 2013, when the ONIC and the *Ministerio de Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación* (MinTic) signed the Agreement 573 for the creation and dissemination of a law proposal for indigenous communications in Colombia. This chapter illustrates the political context, development, and paradoxes of involvement of the indigenous organizations in the topic of communication.

Through the illustration of the process and development of the discussion on communication within indigenous organizations, this chapter also shows the conflict between two tendencies within the indigenous movement of Colombia: while the ONIC and CRIC are pushing for more administrative autonomy – which deepen indigenous incorporation into the bureaucratic logics of the State –, a large sector of the indigenous grassroots advocates, not for administrative, but for other forms of social, economic and epistemic autonomy outside the reach of the State. This discrepancy between the political goals of indigenous organizations and a large sector of indigenous grassroots in Cauca is creating divisions within the movement and it has been used by the state to weaken the mobilization power of the indigenous people.

This chapter starts by contextualizing the political landscape that allows indigenous organizations to envision a larger bureaucratic participation. To understand this political scenario, it discusses the radical change in the relationship between the government and indigenous people from repression and resistance during the Alvaro Uribe Velez government (2002-2010) to the more conciliatory approach during the Juan Manuel Santos administration (2010). This strategic change transformed the relationship between indigenous people and the State from one marked by direct confrontation to another marked by political alliances, agreements, and more incorporation for indigenous people into the state's bureaucratic apparatus.

After this contextualization, I present a discussion on the concept of autonomy in relation to the Colombian context. Here it is explained how the classical concept of autonomy is very controversial since, rather than liberating, it incorporates indigenous authorities into the State dynamics. It is also discussed how indigenous people engage in discourses and practices that challenge the traditional concept of autonomy. This chapter concludes by discussing the construction of an indigenous communication law proposal, which did not become law due to the political and economic ambition of some sectors from the indigenous organizations.

From Repression to Negotiation.

The 1991 Colombian constitution proclaimed one of the most progressive sets of laws for indigenous people in the world at that time (Van Cott, 2000 and Yashar 2005). Although this constitution recognized Colombia as a multicultural nation,

assured full citizenship to indigenous people, and provided them access to spaces for political participation, indigenous people have continued enduring harsh living conditions in the following years. Through the 1990s, poverty, displacement, and violence within indigenous territories prevailed and, in some cases, even increased (Villa and Houghton, 2005).

After the failure of the 1999-2002 peace process between the State and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, FARC, Uribe Velez won the 2002 presidential elections promising to defeat leftist guerrillas through military means. Once he took office, his government launched an aggressive campaign called *Seguridad Democratica* (SD). This controversial campaign succeeded in reducing the influence of leftist guerillas overall (Marks, 2007), but at high social and economic costs. Uribe's SD targeted sectors, such as the indigenous movement, that opposed or disrupted Uribe's neoliberal economic process that privileged extractive industries, foreign capital, and privatization of public goods (Hristov, 2009).

During the Uribe presidency, popular social movements endured high levels of killings, persecution and criminalization. For instance, many indigenous people were displaced, many leaders accused of being members of guerilla organizations, and not few were assassinated. In different regions of the department of Cauca the rates of assassinations skyrocketed, in some cases, to more than 100 percent after launching Uribe's SD policy (Villa and Houghton, 2005: 92). This dramatic situation motivated indigenous organizations to leave all forms of dialogue with the government, including

the *Mesa Permanente de Concertacion (MPC)*¹⁰⁷ in 2006 (Brilman, 2013: 7). The Uribe's administration, as a response, joined a group of other 10 countries which decided to not vote the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People in 2007.

Overall, the Uribe administration's policies carried catastrophic consequences for indigenous people. From 2002 to 2008, more than 1,200 indigenous people were assassinated and at least 54,000 were displaced (Semana. 2008). Uribe's strategies were profoundly contested by indigenous people, especially in Cauca, the Colombian indigenous political stronghold. Throughout Uribe's presidency, indigenous people became one of the strongest oppositional forces, organizing large social mobilizations, such as the *2008 Minga Social and Comunitaria* and denouncing Uribe's authoritarian regime through different communicative strategies, such as internet, radio, video, and magazines. This allowed them to build solidarity networks composed by individuals and institutions from around the world (Krovel, 2017).

For the election of 2010, the indigenous people of Cauca decided to support Antanas Mockus and Gustavo Petro, electoral opponents of Uribe's candidate Juan Manuel Santos¹⁰⁸. Despite the indigenous electoral opposition, Santos won the elections

¹⁰⁷ Created after several indigenous people took over the headquarters of the Episcopal Colombian Conference in 1996 for 45 days, the *Mesa Permanente de Concertacion* is a commission composed by indigenous representatives and members of the State. Representing the State, there is INCODER (Instituto Colombiano de Desarrollo Rural), representatives from various ministries, and different State's agencies. Representing indigenous people, there is the indigenous senators in congress, the three indigenous participants in the 1991 constitutional assembly (Taita Lorenzo Muelas decided to not return and Francisco Rojas Birri is currently in jail for corruption), representatives of three indigenous organizations – ONIC, OPIAC, Confederacion Indigena Tairona – and a representative of each of the five macro-regionals elected by the people at each region.

¹⁰⁸ As the archives of the Registraduria Nacional shows, these oppositional candidates won, or obtained more votes than the average national level, in municipalities with large number of indigenous population. For instance, Jambalo (Mockus 1,717; Petro 355; Santos 329), Silvia (Petro 2,987; Santos 2201; Mockus 1273), Toribio (Mockus 3223; Petro 1238; Santos 371). The tendency of these results

with a high margin over Mockus, Petro and other rivals. Once in charge, Santos made drastic policy changes in the way the government dealt with oppositional groups. He stopped the belligerent language against social organizations, employed clientelist tactics to establish alliances with both, former political rivals and some Uribe's allies, and initiated another peace process with the FARC. All these changes transformed the Colombian political landscape. On one hand, Uribe Velez declared his opposition to the Santos administration, formed a new political party with some of his more radical followers, and started an aggressive campaign against the Santos' peace process. On the other hand, leftist parties, black and indigenous organizations, and other sectors that previously declared their opposition to the Uribe-Santos administrations, started to support Santos' peace initiative and later supported Santos' reelection in 2014.

In the specific case of the indigenous movement, Santos gained support from this sector by improving dialogue with the ONIC, CRIC, and other influential indigenous organizations. This dialogue, however, has not translated into much concrete improvement for the lives of indigenous grassroots. According to the ONIC, Santos' administration fulfilled less than 20 percent of all accords signed with the indigenous organizations during his first presidential period (2012-2014) (Orduz, 2015). Besides, the dialogue between the State and indigenous organization has not aimed to make structural changes in the economic model that affects indigenous lives. Rather, the discussion is reduced to persuading indigenous people of accepting decisions already

were completely different than the regional (Santos 124,572; Mockus 98,846; Petro 38,678) and the national ones (Santos 6,802,043; Mockus 3,134,222; Petro 1,331,267).

taken by the government, to include indigenous people into already existing State programs, and to provide access for indigenous organizations to small public administrative tasks (Caviedes, 2011 in Brillman, 2016: 17).

The indigenous approval of the Santos' *Ley de Víctimas* represents an example of the conciliatory, but paradoxical relationship between Santos administration and indigenous people. In 2011 indigenous organizations decided to reestablish the *Mesa Permanente de Concertación (MPC)* due to the improvement in their relationship with the State. Once reestablished, the MPC had to evaluate and approve Amendment 4633 of 2011 on the *Ley de Víctimas*¹⁰⁹ - the law that seeks to compensate the victims of the Colombian armed conflict. This amendment was necessary since the initial law excluded indigenous people, among the victims of the Colombian armed conflict. Due to legislative time constraints, the government pressured indigenous representatives to lift temporarily the process of consultation within the communities and accept the proposed amendment without major objections. The MPC finally accepted Santos' proposal and approved the amendment, saving the *Ley de Víctimas* from being overturned by the Constitutional Court due to the initial lack of indigenous approval. Even though the approval of this law represented a very important step in the recognition of indigenous people as victims of the Colombian armed conflict, various voices within the indigenous movement disapproved of this procedure, considering it contrary to the indigenous right of *prior consultation*. However, if the *Ley de Víctimas* were overturned,

¹⁰⁹ This law has been resisted by different sectors of the Colombian political spectrum. For the left, the law does not provide the necessary instruments to compensate the victims of the armed conflict and excludes some sectors who are also victims. For the right, the law jeopardizes the legally obtained property rights of many individuals (Reina, 2014).

indigenous people and other victims of the armed conflict would potentially become immersed in a conflict (Brilman, 2016). In other words, the members of the MPC had no other likeable option, but to accept Santos proposal. This is an explicit example of how this new political approach appears to be more conciliatory, but it does not really provide many tools for the participation of indigenous people into deliberation and decision making.

This *lesser of two evils* decision created tensions within the indigenous world. Due to the misinformation and the normal distrust Santos inspired among some sectors of the indigenous grassroots, various local indigenous leaders manifested their opposition to the decision taken by indigenous organizations. For instance, one of the editorials of the *Tejido de Comunicacion de la ACIN (TC-ACIN)* protested for the temporary lifting of the *prior consultation* process and suggested that their representatives were falling in the political game of Santos' administration (TC-ACIN, 2010).

The events of the 2013 *Paro Nacional Agrario* also shows the paradoxes in which the indigenous movement is immersed during this more conciliatory era in their relationship with the State. From August 19 to September 12, various peasant organizations carried out a national strike due to their deep economic crisis. According to peasant organizations, this crisis is a consequence of the Colombian economic model, which privileges mining production over agriculture, endorses large agro industrial companies over small peasant economy, and promotes the importation of food and agriculture goods. Peasants explained their impossibility to compete against the low

prices of imported goods due to the deplorable state of the roads, the lack of subsidies for food production, and the gradual concentration of land tenancy in hands of few (Salcedo, Pinzon, and Duarte 2013).

Although indigenous organizations also participated in this strike, peasant and indigenous organizations had two different agendas. Dorado (2013), identifies three reasons for the divisions between peasants and indigenous people. First, members of the *Dignidad Cafetera*, one of the leader sectors in the peasant organization, did not allow full participation in decision making and negotiation positions to indigenous Nasas during previous peasant mobilizations. Second, these two groups compete for land in different areas of Colombia, including Cauca. Historically, land tenure is a very difficult topic in Cauca since peasants, indigenous and Afros argue over the remainders left over from the control of powerful land owners and large agro-businesses. Third, there were rumors that the ex-president Uribe had some influence over some sectors of the peasant organizations. Many indigenous people do not want to have any sort of involvement with any organization, political movement, or institution related to one of their greatest political enemies (Dorado, 2013).

One of the most controversial points in the indigenous organization's agenda during this strike was the expansion of their administrative autonomy through the transformation of indigenous cabildos into *Entidades Territoriales Indigenas* (ETI). According to the article 56 of the 1991 Colombian Constitution, ETIs were projected to be autonomous entities with the power to administer resources destined for health, education, water control, among others (Moreno, 2004). In more than 20 years, the State

never sanctioned the necessary reforms for the implementation of these ETIs. This was, in part, because the implementation required the complete reorganizing of the political structure of the nation. If the resources for indigenous cabildos were transferred directly, many municipal institutions that provide services to non-indigenous population would disappear, exacerbating conflicts between indigenous and other populations (bid).

Taking advantage of the divisions between indigenous and peasant organizations, the Santos administration carried out two meetings with the indigenous leaders from Cauca, one of the most powerful and militant sectors involved in this strike. As a result of this negotiation, the indigenous people decided to leave the strike, reopen the Pan-American road, and leave the peasant movement alone, in exchange for continuing negotiating the five-point indigenous agenda with the State.

In addition to the creation of the ETIs, this agenda also contained discussions on topics related to territory, prior consultation and mining, self-governance, agrarian politics, and human rights (Suarez, 2013). This accord between Santos and indigenous organizations from Cauca was highly criticized, not only by the members of the traditional powerful families of Cauca and members of peasant organizations, but also by critical voices within the indigenous community for leaving the peasants alone and for carrying these negotiations with the State. While indigenous representatives and State envoys were negotiating cheerfully and drinking *chirrincho* – a traditional alcoholic drink of the indigenous people – members of the *guardia indigena* were having a harsh confrontation with the police for maintaining control over blockage

points at the Pan-American road. This is why critical voices within indigenous world named this pact ironically as “*el Pacto del Chirrincho*” (Dorado, 2013).

Due to their friendly relationships with the government, regional and national indigenous organizations decided overwhelmingly to support Santos’ reelection campaign for the 2014-2018 period (El Espectador, 2014). This decision radically departed from the previous presidential election, when indigenous organizations supported candidates in opposition against traditional sectors of the Colombian ruling class. Although the ONIC explained this political move as an act for supporting the ongoing peace process (bid), this decision was influenced by the promises Santos made in relation to legislation that would increase the participation of indigenous people into the administrative state apparatus – including approving an indigenous communication law. Santos was finally re-elected and, few months later, he signed the Decree 1953 of 2014, which creates a special temporary regime to establish the ETIs until congress issued a new law that guarantees the functioning of these new institutions. Even though the Constitutional Court declared constitutional this decree, its enforcement is still pending.

In summary, the Santos administration promoted an apparent radically different approach to relate with the indigenous organizations. Santos’ approach has promoted dialogue and support of new laws that would potentially allow more participation of indigenous organizations in the administration of public resources. However, many of these laws and promises have been unfulfilled and indigenous communities still endure high levels of poverty and marginalization.

Santos' economic plan continues to rely on revenue from exportation of primary commodities, many of them extracted from indigenous territories. According to Santos and his ministry of finances, during the projected post-conflict era the State would have the opportunity to develop this type of projects in areas currently controlled by the FARC – many of which coincide with indigenous territories (Confidencial Colombia, 2015). More research is needed to understand better the reasons and the impacts of Santos' apparently benevolent approach towards indigenous organizations. For now, I hypothesize that this is a façade strategy, not to improve the lives of indigenous people, but to improve the country's evaluations from credit rating agencies in order to attract more foreign investment for development projects in a hypothetical post-conflict scenario.

At this point, it is possible to assure that the administrative-bureaucratic autonomy, in which indigenous organizations are becoming emerged and the Santos administration has promoted, has created some venues for autonomous provision of services within indigenous territories, but it has also reinforced the overall power of the State over these communities. As a result, sectors within indigenous movement reject this administrative approach, promoting autonomic views and actions that do not depend on the State's resources.

Views on Autonomy

There is no a consensus on the concept and projection of indigenous autonomy among the indigenous movement of Colombia. While the official voice of indigenous

organizations proclaim the necessity of furthering the autonomic administration of the resources within indigenous territories, critical sectors within indigenous grassroots have manifested their rejection against the progression of indigenous organization towards administrative autonomy. This former sector within the indigenous world push towards autonomic struggles outside the scope and power of the State. As earlier stated, this lack of concordance is creating tensions and conflicts among the indigenous people of Cauca.

Before continuing discussing the current tensions within the indigenous world about the different conceptions on autonomy, it is important to provide an historical contextualization of this discussion. Since the 1970s, indigenous people from Cauca as well as many other regions through Latin America focused on the idea of territorial autonomy, initially as a strategy for protecting their lives and their culture – deeply affected by the action of State institutions, powerful landowners, and the church – and as a political tool for resisting the onslaught by the neoliberal policies (Diaz Polanco, 1991 and 2009; Newling 2001; and González, M., Burguete, A., & Ortiz, P. 2010).

Transnational organizations have played a very important role in legitimizing this indigenous struggle for autonomy. The convention 169 of the International Labor Organization (ILO), for instance, was the first international legislation referring to indigenous rights, establishing an international legal framework that opens the possibilities for self-governance and autonomy for indigenous people. The Article 7 (1) specifically states:

The people concerned shall have the right to decide their own priorities for the process of development as it affects their lives,

beliefs, institutions and spiritual well-being and the lands they occupy or otherwise use, and to exercise control, to the extent possible, over their own economic, social and cultural development.

Sustained over the ideas of cultural difference, territoriality, and the right of self-governance, indigenous autonomy implies community's agency over the State's legal decisions, respect for customary law and indigenous institutions, and participation in decentralized administrative tasks in areas, such as health and education (Sieder, 2002: 4, Roldan, 2000: 22, 25, and Sanchez, Roldan, and Sanchez 1993: 32).

There were many complex reasons why the ILO and other transnational organizations intervened in this discussion. Even though the political pressure from the indigenous people was fundamental for promoting the idea of autonomy, the actions of these transnational agencies were also motivated by hegemonic ideas on modernization and development. Since the 1980s, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank have been actively supporting political agendas that sought to transform the States' 'inefficient' and corporative structures into 'modern', 'efficient', and decentralized ones. These international financial institutions have deemed indigenous and black communities as groups with great potential for national economies in terms of development, human capital and stabilization (Davis, 2002: 232). These institutions consider indigenous inclusion, via territorial autonomy, as fundamental to prevent social tensions against developmental agendas (232).

Based on the experiences of Nicaragua – the first country which implemented autonomic regions in Latin America –, Spain, and the Soviet Union, Diaz Polanco (1991) provided a theoretical analysis of this form of autonomy. He explains the

difficulties of providing general definition of autonomy since each case is molded by, on one hand, the historical nature of the group that claim for autonomy and, on the other hand, the political orientation of the nation-state. The specificities in the negotiation between these two shape the institutionalization, practices, and extension of these autonomic regimes (152). Nevertheless, Diaz Polanco points out that a sustainable and functional autonomic system should always have six basic characteristics: (1) autonomy and nation-state – they need to be part of the political-juridical state apparatus (153), (2) autonomy and ethnic rights – there is a need of recognizing the nation as a pluri-cultural entity (155), (3) autonomy and self-determination need to be projected as an instrument for the exercise of self-determination; (4) territorial base– it needs a specific place where groups exercise their rights and their judiciary institutions (164); (5) a legal and institutional character – it needs to have a stronger legal bases than just simple decrees; (6) and autonomic competences – it requires a political and administrative decentralization of the State (198).

In the same venue, Gonzalez, Burguete y Ortiz (2010) explains that the autonomic regions of Nicaragua and the indigenous resguardos of Colombia typify what he names as ‘autonomic regimes’ (regimes autonomicos). These regimes are characterized by having legal structures that recognized the right of self-determination of indigenous people and the incorporation of indigenous autonomic regimes into state’s organization (39). In other words, these indigenous autonomic regimes imply the inclusion of indigenous people into the administrative dynamics of the State (Diaz Polanco, 1991 and Gonzalez, Burguete y Ortiz 2010).

In relation to the Colombian case, the right of territorial autonomy was granted to indigenous people after a peace accord with the indigenous self-defense guerilla *Quintin Lame* and the 1991 constitutional assembly negotiation (Van-Cott, 2001). This has allowed indigenous people to establish interesting tools for self-governing, such as the indigenous guard (*guardia indigena*) for territorial control, self-developmental plans (*planes de vida*), self-jurisdiction (*derecho mayor y justicia propia*), and plans for environmental protection and food sovereignty (*autoridades ambientales y soberania alimentaria*) (Ulloa, 2010: 161-170).

Even though some of these initiatives have brought positive consequences for indigenous community life – such as the indigenous guard (Rudqvist and Anrup, 2013) –, this autonomy regime has been insufficient to resolve harsh social and economic conditions endured by indigenous people. In January 2013, the Colombian Department of National Statistics (DANE) published a report conducted in 2011 that shows that, after Choco, the region of Cauca is the second most impoverished in Colombia with a poverty rate of 62 percent (almost the double the national poverty – 34, 1 percent rate) and with an extreme poverty of 34 percent (almost three times more than the national rate – 10, 6 percent) (DANE, 2013).

As Castillo (2016) shows, the poverty level are reflected in on high levels of malnutrition among indigenous peoples. Based on the last national poll on demography and health (*Encuesta Nacional de Demografía y Salud*) carried by the State in 2010, she explains that malnutrition levels of indigenous children younger than 5 years is 29.5 at national level. This number is very high considering the overall 13.2 percent at national

level. In relation to the region, 24 percent of the children from Cauca suffers of malnutrition.

Even though this study does not specify the situation of the Misak and Nasa people, we have some indications about high levels of malnutrition among this population. For instance, Garcia (2015) discusses the case of malnutrition among Nasa community from the municipality of Caldono, Cauca. She explains that the high level of malnutrition in this municipality is a consequence of various problems, including the economic limitations that affect self-production and the subsequent replacement of native food by products with low nutritional value. Although the State has developed programs to fight malnutrition, such as the Center for Nutritious Recovery (CNR) (Centros de Recuperacion Nutricional), those programs has alleviated participants temporarily, but they have become inefficient due to the miscommunication and the non-inclusion of Nasa cultural views.

As Gonzalez (2010) and Ulloa (2008) explain, the Colombian autonomic regime has never been fully implemented. Quite the opposite, the State has launched laws and regulations that have restricted the action of indigenous people. In addition to the lack of willingness to establish the Entidades Territoriales Indigenas (ETIs), the armed conflict has disrupted and limited the judicial and administrative functions of the cabildos and supporting governmental institutions have been reduced and defunded (Gonzalez, 2010: 50).

Since indigenous autonomy has not been fully implemented, indigenous organizations argue that the lack of significant improvement in the lives of indigenous

people is a result, not of the implementation of an autonomic regime, but the lack of its development. However, the deeper implementation of these administrative autonomic regimes have created more problems than solutions to indigenous communities in other areas of Latin-America. For instance, Hale (2011) warns about the paradoxes aroused by this State-indigenous negotiated “autonomy” in Central America. Autonomy has made indigenous organizations to act as State agents, even when they are attempting to contest the onslaught of those neoliberal regimes (189).

According to Hale (2011), administrative autonomy resulted in a very effective neoliberal governance, which restricts indigenous grievances beyond their local territories and, for extension, beyond their ethnic boundaries (195); increases responsibilities without providing adequate resources (194); brings endless operational procedures and flow of meaningless meetings (205); silences the most able indigenous leaders by offering them quasi-governmental jobs (195); and divides identity-oriented social movements through the fatiguing tension between the structural imposition of the neoliberal regime and the anti-systemic discourse that drive their autonomic ambitions (196). As a conclusion, Hale (2011) explains that the gaining of territorial autonomy for indigenous people are inversely proportional to the weakening of their emancipatory potential against the neoliberal governance. He adds that identity oriented movements need other resistance methodologies that allow both, to satisfy immediate needs as well as to create of new alternatives of life beyond the limits of neoliberal hegemony (203 and 205).

The Colombian health policy for indigenous people provides an excellent example for Hale's view of autonomy as a tool for expanding neoliberal governance over indigenous populations. The Law 100 of 1993, which privatized and decentralized the administration of the control and services of health care in Colombia, allowed indigenous people to take some control over this crucial service. Overall, this decentralizing and for profit reform has resulted in the creation of a very inefficient, corrupt, and more costly health system for all Colombians (Patiño, 2015).

In relation to the indigenous people, the scarce existing academic literature on this topic provides a quite dark panorama. Even though this system has allowed indigenous organizations to create their own institutions to administrate health companies, or Health Promoting Enterprises (Empresas Promotoras de Salud, EPS) and health care delivery facilities (Instituciones Prestadoras de Salud, IPS), Puerta Silva (2004) and Portela-Guarin (2014) explain that this system has strong regulations that finally restrict the incorporation of indigenous health knowledges.

Mignone, Nallim and Gomez Vargas (2014) present a more nuanced scenario. They explain that decentralization of health brought some positive outcomes for indigenous people. It improves more access to health care services, promotes bilingual services, and promotes the training of indigenous people as health professionals. However, this system also promotes the competition among indigenous EPS, has very limited covering plans, restricts the incorporation of indigenous non-traditional health methods, and frequently lacks of basic medical resources (99-102). At the end of their article, they recognize that their results were based mostly on limited empirical

evidence. They explain that it is very complicated to prove the effectiveness or failures of indigenous autonomous health systems due to the lack of funding for regulatory control. This fact makes evident the serious structural problems of this health system. Not surprisingly, these authors advocate for the promoting of autonomic alternatives for health provision within indigenous communities, rather than expanding this inefficient system (103).

Through my fieldwork experience within indigenous communities of Cauca, I witnessed the social problems that arose from this for profit-based “autonomous” health system. Among the Misak community of Guambia, for instance, in addition to the general dissatisfaction for the failures in the service – lack of qualified personal due to low salaries, denial of services for complex cases, scarcity of medicine, etc. –, this system has created harsh political divisions for the administrative control of the community’s hospital, *Mama Dominga*. In 2013, Misak Governor Mama Asencion Velasco signed a contract with the EPS *Emsanar* to administrate the community’s health resources, replacing the indigenous EPS *Mallamas*. This unleashed a bitter confrontation between her administration and members of the community involved in management positions at *Mallamas*. The former assured that Velasco and her aides received bribes from *Emsanar*, while the latter affirmed that those who worked for *Mallamas* were responsible for the acute financial crisis of *Mama Dominga* – which had approximately deficit of 762.340.641 pesos (405.387 US dollars in 2013). This is an approximate number since, according to Velasco, a precise amount was impossible to

reach due the problems – missing receipts, incomplete information, problems with archives, etc. – at the hospital accounting department.

The crisis at the Hospital *Mama Dominga* shows how the for-profit orientation of the decentralized health system promotes competition between indigenous enterprises as well as division and corruption within indigenous communities. In addition, this autonomic system made indigenous authorities resolve complex administrative problems, such as the one at *Mama Dominga*, without counting with the necessary resources and personnel for monitoring, investigating, and regulating. As the chapter on evangelical indigenous radio shows, external groups with their own political and social agendas ended up providing alternatives for the deficient decentralized services. This empowered these external groups to the detriment of these indigenous authorities.

Some indigenous people have promoted alternatives to the neoliberal and highly state controlled version of autonomy. The case of the Zapatistas represents one of the most famous of these “autonomic alternatives”. Since 2003, after some failing negotiations with the Mexican State for a legal recognition of a territorial autonomy, Zapatistas focused on developed their own community oriented and self-financed de facto-autonomy organized through their Councils of Good Government (Juntas de Buen Gobierno) (Harvey, 9: 2016). This decision has allowed the Zapatistas to provide essential services to their own communities, such as health care, education, and agriculture services.

The Zapatistas, who in principle do not receive any funding from the State, support their projects with some aid from solidarity groups, but mostly with resources obtain from collective production projects (13). In addition to promoting self-fulfillment and self-empowerment, the Zapatistas have achieved to neutralize State's attempts for cooptation that include the provision of resources – i.e. construction and agriculture material – and services, especially health. This autonomic approach has also achieved to dismantle traditional clientelist networks that involved the use of subsidies to secure political support in election times. It has also undermined neoliberal ruling that impose market oriented forms of education and health among indigenous communities (Harvey, 2016 and Diaz Polanco, 2009). In other words, the Zapatista's autonomy represent an outstanding radical political action that disempowers the neoliberal governance by cutting dependencies on a system designed to maintain the benefits of powerful few and the exploitation of grassroots, such as indigenous people.

One of the most impressive characteristics of the Zapatistas' autonomic process is way in which the community has become organized. They created internal political structures, communal spaces for decision making, and a large networks of external supporters. This organization has allowed them to maintain their autonomous program regardless of enormous difficulties, such as the scarcity of economic resources that limits the provision of services, especially in the most isolated territories, the physical violence of State sponsored paramilitaries, and the State's attempts to co-op and divide Zapatista's grassroots (Harvey, 2016 and Diaz Polanco, 2009).

This difficult political process is a product of years of forging political subjects with the willingness to embrace in all sort of sacrifices implied on such a strong political, cultural and epistemic resistance. This subjectification process was possible due to the synergy of various forces, such as the communal practices of indigenous people, the intervention of theologians of liberation, and the participation of leftist students¹¹⁰.

As it is shown, the classical concept of indigenous autonomy involves the inclusion of indigenous organizations into the bureaucratic dynamics of the State. Even though this type of autonomy allows some forms of administrative participation for indigenous authorities, this autonomy brings overall divisive challenges for the indigenous movement. As Hale shows in the case of Central America and I discussed in relation to the case of health services in Cauca, this form of autonomy forges internal conflicts, enforces neoliberal State governance, limits the political agenda of indigenous people in relation to broader claims, and constrains strategic relationships with other oppressed social sectors. Through the historical analysis of the discussion on indigenous communication law, we will see how the indigenous organizations are oriented towards an administrative autonomic approach, creating difficulties for the development of autonomic proposals that do not depend on State's regulations and resources.

¹¹⁰ Enrique Dussel, in a conference in Murcia, Spain, provide some interesting elements to understand that some of the most important theoretical roots of Zapatismo are based on radical Catholicism and indigenous cultures. Zapatistas borrowed one of their most important principles 'lead by obeying' (mandar obedeciendo) from Marcos 10:42-44: "Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ⁴³Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all." 'Lead by obeying' is a radical departure of a liberal views on political power, which presupposes up-down repressive relationship. Here, it is the people rule, and the rules are only those who carry the decisions of the people. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JuGyjGosmR4>

The development of the discussion on communication law

In 1987, the Vincentian missionaries at Tierradentro, Cauca, had to overcome several legal restrictions for establishing *Radio Eucha*, the first radio station that broadcasted in an indigenous language (Nasa) in Colombia (see chapter 3). Vásquez explains:

Hard was the struggle of the Church of Tierradentro to open the radio station “Radio Eucha” (this means “good morning” in Paez language). It was hard, not only for the high economic cost, but for the incomprehensible difficulty to obtain the necessary official approvals. Eight or ten years of applications, petitions, explanations, deadlines, broken promises, pledges, negative responses, comings and goings, but the authorization was not being achieved. It was amazing that, even though the Paeces are the largest indigenous group in Colombia, making their language the most spoken after Spanish, there was not a previous radio experience in a language different than the “oficial” in Colombia. But, anyways, the permission was finally obtained. It was a jubilant event for the entire region.¹¹¹ (Vasquez, 1992: 394).

As we could see in Chapter 4, this restrictive legislative landscape was reformed into one more favorable towards community media in the following years. The recognition of communication as a right opened the door for a series of laws that facilitated the creation of indigenous radio stations, such as the creation of the division of social development at the Ministry of Communication (1990), the creation of the Ministry of

¹¹¹ “Dura fue la lucha de la Iglesia de Tierradentro para lograr el montaje y puesta en marcha de la Emisora “Radio Eucha”. (Es término de saludo en lengua Paez, que equivaldría más o menos, a nuestro “buenos días”). Dura, no solo y no tanto por los altos costos que era preciso cubrir, sino por la incomprensible dificultad para obtener las necesarias aprobaciones oficiales. Ocho o diez años de solicitudes, memoriales, explicaciones, plazos, promesas incumplidas, ofrecimientos y negativas, antesalas, idas y venidas. “y no se alcanzaba la autorización. Increíble, siendo como son los Paeces el grupo indígena más numeroso de Colombia, y su lengua por tanto la más hablada después del español. No existía, cierto, precedente de emisora alguna en Colombia con programación en lengua distinta de la “oficial”... Pero, en fin, se obtuvo el permiso; fue acontecimiento que sacudió de júbilo a toda la región”.

Culture and its radio division (2008), and the Decree 1446 of 1995 – first law that recognizes *community radio* and *radio of public interest* in Colombia.

Despite these great advances, the indigenous people realized soon that the legal regulation alleviated, but did not resolve their two broad problems in relation to the Colombian media landscape – the historical exclusion and misrepresentation of indigenous people in mass media (Cortes, 2016) and the lack of guarantees for the consolidation of their own media projects, in terms of sustainability, security, power, and limitations for transmission networking (Chapter 4 and RPI, 2000).

Conscious of the necessity of a reform of media legislation and motivated with the idea of consolidating their media projects, indigenous media practitioners from Cauca, sometimes with the support of their local authorities, launched a series of actions to meet, exchange, and learn from the experiences of other indigenous and non-indigenous media practitioners. These actions included production workshops, academic research, summits, and popular communication schools, among others.

One of the first actions in this process was the *Minga Con los Pueblos Indigenas y Por el Derecho a Su Palabra* – MPIDP (the Minga for the Indigenous Cultures for the Right of their Voice) launched in 2001. This two year process included a series of events, organized by several indigenous cabildos and the University of Valle, with the sponsorship of the European Commission of Human Rights. In these events participated more than a thousand of people affiliated with indigenous media projects, young and elders from the Misak, Totoroes, Yanaconas, Kokonucos, and Nasa cultures. Five main objectives oriented the development of these events. The first and second objectives

were summed as “the design, implementation, and evaluation of communication strategies for the strengthening of the community’s social organization” (diseño, implementacion, seguimiento, y evaluacion de estrategias de comunicacion para el fortalecimiento de la organizacion social de los pueblos) (MDP, 2003:3). To fulfill these goals, the organizers carried out music festivals, music composition workshops, meetings between community young people and elders, and photography workshops (3-10).

The third objective of the MPIDP was “rising awareness and training of young people from the Misak, Nasa, Kokonuko, Yanaconas and Totoroes, about: participation in political organization, life plans, dialogue with elders, protection of their political, cultural and social identity” (sensibilizacion y formacion de jovenes Misak, Nasa, Kokonuco, Yanaconas and Totoroes sobre: participation en political organization, planes de vida, dialogo con los mayores, proteccion de la identidad politica, cultural y social de los pueblos) (MDP, 2003:12). This plan included six discussion meetings (mingas de pensamiento) in which participants discussed the history of the indigenous movement, armed conflict, resistance, social control, authority and justice (12-18) and a workshop on designing and printing on fabric (19).

The fourth objective was the production of audio and video materials about the political, cultural and social identities of the people from Guambia, Nasa, Kokonuco, and Totoroes (produccion de materiales moviles para audio y video en torno a las identidades politicas, culturales y sociales de los Pueblos Guambianos, Nasa, Kokonuco, y Totoroes) (21). This activity included the production of the series Faces of

Hope (Rostros de la Esperanza), which represented situations related to identity, authority, autonomy, territory, education, and environment (22) and the provision of equipment for several radio stations from the participant communities (23).

The fifth objective was the policy's proposal about information and non-stereotyped portrayal of indigenous men and women in mass communication (formulacion de una politica de informacion y representacion no estereotipada de los indigenas y las indigenas en los medios de comunicacion masivas) (MDP, 2003:22). This activity included monitoring mass media, the analysis of the collected information, and the publishing of a book called "La Representacion de lo Indigena en los Medios Masivos de Television" (2005). One of the most interesting activities for this objective was the organization of various roundtables with indigenous representatives, academics, members of the Ministry of Communication, and people related to mass media production – owners, producers, and journalists – to discuss about mass media and indigenous representation (MDP, 2003: 22).

Overall one of the most discussed topics in this event was the necessity of a legal reform that facilitate the existence of indigenous media. Indigenous participants recognized the power of mass media in the promotion and consolidation of negative stereotypes among the Colombian society. Mass media representations, they argued, affect the existence of indigenous cultures by disregarding indigenous' people existence, grievances, and political participation. Those few moments when indigenous people are portrayed, they are represented as either archaic-folkloric figures or dangerous subjects who threat the peace and development of the nation (MDP,

2003:23). Participants were aware that these representations, in turn, influences the exclusion of indigenous people from broader spaces of political deliberation, and affects public policy and the political decisions taken by State's entities in relation to indigenous communities (23). To overturn this situation, indigenous people demanded to media producers and the entities of the State to, first, end these historically negative representations into the promotion of positive aspects of the indigenous cultural and political history and, second, guarantee the operation of indigenous media, especially radio stations (23).

Indigenous people proposed 18 points for being considered in a hypothetical indigenous communication law framework. Among these points were: representing indigenous peoples as political actors, training journalists who work with indigenous issues, monitoring permanently mass media, establishing clear rules for exercise the right of replying media messages, opening spaces for the participation of indigenous people at the production of mass media, constructing a manual of ethics to report indigenous issues, transmitting mass media on indigenous languages, reporting about the multicultural character of the nation, and discussing the political agendas of indigenous people (MDP, 2003:24-26).

According to the MPIDP's final report, local indigenous authorities became more supportive through the development of the dialogues between indigenous communicators, journalists, and members of the Ministry of Communication. The report also points out the lack of interest and support from regional organizations – CRIC and AICO –, even though the persistent invitation from local authorities to participate in the

planning and development of these activities (27). Years later in personal interviews, Jeremias Tunubala and Liliana Pechene, two of the Misak media producers and organizers of this and other similar communication events, explained to me that the lack of participation of the regional and national indigenous organizations in this and many other of this type of events was not due only to their apathy for the topic of communication. Apparently, leaders at regional and national indigenous organizations deemed these events as attempts to create political dissidence threatening their authority.

Through the passing of the years, indigenous organizations started to become more involved in the discussion of indigenous communication. For instance, in 2006, indigenous media producers, with the support of CRIC, created the AMCIC network - the network of 12 indigenous radio stations from Cauca. One of the first events of the AMCIC network was to organize the First National Summit of Indigenous Communication (Primer Evento Nacional de Comunicacion Indigena – PENCI) in Guambia, Misak's territory. According to a PENCI planning document, the goal of this event was to create a political plan to demand special legislation for indigenous radio stations. More specifically, this document stated:

(...) it is urgent a formulation and coordination of a communication law for indigenous peoples. This is essential for carrying actions towards cultural strengthening in relation to communication, which must be articulated with our processes for consultation in order to respect our visions, participation and our concepts about media content (...) ¹¹² (PENCI, 2006).

¹¹² es urgente la formulación y concertación de una política de comunicación para pueblos indígenas, indispensable para las acciones útiles de fortalecimiento cultural de nuestras particularidades en material de comunicacion, las cuales deben hacerse dentro de procesos de consulta que respeten nuestra vision, participacion y definicion de contenidos.

There were many other events like PENCI over the following years. For instance, in 2009, indigenous media practitioners from Cauca, representatives of the CRIC and the ONIC, and members of the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Information Technologies and Communication met in the municipality of Totoro, Cauca, to discuss a law reform (Law 1341) that later would create the Agency of the National Spectrum (Agencia Nacional del Espectro), an entity that would regulate the use of the electromagnetic spectrum in the nation.

During this conversation, indigenous people stated, once again, the problems indigenous radios endured since their creation:

Overall the top problems are related to public policy for indigenous communication (...) in a context characterized by four dynamics: 1. Violence and armed conflict, 2. Constant legislative changes 3. The electoral system, and 4. The organizational dynamics of each community, which represents one of the principal problems for those radio stations. The specific community dynamics are not considered when a radio station and indigenous social communicators are planned. It is evident that the coordination between the authorities and organizations has recently improved, but weaknesses persist in relation to management and administration.¹¹³ (ERCI, 2009).

Even though the problems addressed here are discussed in Chapter 3, it is important to emphasize the difficult relationship between indigenous media producers, their local authorities, and their regional and national organizations. According to indigenous

¹¹³ En general las problemáticas principales se relacionan con cuestiones de políticas públicas de Comunicación Indígena diferencial e integral y económicas, en un contexto caracterizado por cuatro dinámicas: 1. La violencia y el conflicto armado, 2. Los cambios legislativos y 3. La mecánica electoral, y 4. La dinámica organizativa de cada pueblo que constituyen los principales problemas para las emisoras, mismo que no son tenidas en cuenta a la hora de pensar en la proyección de las emisoras como de sus comunicadores sociales indígenas. Esto genera una falta de apropiación de las comunidades y las autoridades. Se evidencia que la articulación con las autoridades y organizaciones es reciente y ha tomado fuerza, pero la debilidad de la gestión y administración persiste.

media producers, despite little improvement in their relation with their local authorities, these authorities continued disregarding their role for the indigenous movement, making acuter the problems of indigenous media projects. In order to improve this relationship, indigenous media producers and leaders propose to incorporate indigenous radio stations and other communication proposals into the political lines of the indigenous movement, rather than letting them operate as ‘loose cannons’ (repensar las emisoras indigenas y las demas formas de comunicacion como estructuras que deben hacer parte de las lineas politicas del movimiento indigena nacional, regional y local, para no dejarlas volando como ruedas sueltas) (ERCI, 2009: 2).

This concept of indigenous media producers as ‘loose cannons’ illustrates the tensions between media producers, local authorities, and regional-national indigenous organizations. Even though these three parties have worked together in different occasions, their relationship has been complicated, especially when indigenous media practitioners criticize authorities and indigenous organizations – see chapter three.

In 2010, the CRIC organized the First Continental Indigenous Communication Summit - PCCC (Primera Cumbre de Comunicacion Continental) at La Maria, Piendamó, Cauca. This four day event gathered more than 1500 people from more than 150 different national and international indigenous organizations, media projects, local authorities, academics, members of state’s institutions, and sympathizers (PCCCIAY, 2010). During this event, there were presentations about four media experiences from Cauca – Tejido de Comunicacion, Uswal Nasa Yuwe Estereo, Radio Libertad, and Namuy Wam –, discussions about the cultural, political, and the economic context

endured by indigenous people through the continent, and debates on the political perspectives of indigenous movement at local, national and regional level. In addition, participants were divided in nine roundtables where specific topics were discussed: (1) Communication from the *cosmo-vision* of our cultures (la comunicación desde la cosmovision de nuestros Pueblos), (2) The role of communication in the organization processes and the resistance against the model of aggression (el papel de la comunicación en los procesos organizativos y de lucha de los pueblos frente al modelo de agresión), (3) Women, youth, and elders in the processes of indigenous communication (las mujeres, jóvenes, y adultos mayores en los medios y procesos de comunicación indígena), (4) Training for the people's communication (formación y capacitación para la comunicación de los pueblos), (5) The right of information and communication: exercise, legislation, and communication policies for minority groups (derecho a la información y comunicación: ejercicio, legislación y políticas de comunicación para minorías), (6) Sustainability of the processes and indigenous media (Sostenibilidad de los procesos y medios de comunicación indígenas), (7) Contents for the process of resistance of the people and the construction of the *good life* (contenidos para el proceso de lucha de los pueblos y la construcción del Buen Vivir), (8) Access and usage of the Technologies of Information and Communication (acceso y aprovechamiento de las tecnologías de información y comunicación) (TICs), (9) Networking and projection of the communication processes of *Abya Yala* (articulación, redes y proyección de los procesos de comunicación del Abya Yala – America in the indigenous Kuna's language) (PCCCIAY, 2010).

At the end of the PCCC, the representatives of all participating indigenous organizations signed a declaration which summarizes the denunciations and demands discussed, and the commitments assumed by these organizations. In relation to the denunciation, indigenous people from all around the continent coincided that they all endured three main problems within their territories: the continuing high levels of violence and human right violations, the assassination of local leaders, and the difficult working conditions in the exercise of media production and distribution. In order to resolve the last problem, they demanded state legislation that would guarantee training, access, sustainability, and infrastructure for indigenous media. These demands also included the elimination of taxes for indigenous media, free access to the electromagnetic spectrum, respect of the sacred indigenous territories, monitoring and control of mass media representation of indigenous people, inclusion of indigenous issues within mass media agendas, and protection of legal and property rights over indigenous cultural production. Finally, they committed to carrying out 35 different actions, that included the organization of the Second Continental Indigenous Communication Summit – IICCC (Segunda Cumbre de Comunicacion Continental) in Mexico, the declaration of 2012 as the year of the indigenous communication, the creation of a continental media network to establish permanent communication between indigenous communities and other social sectors (afros, peasants, and others), the training of their own technicians to lower the costs of the maintenance of media equipment, the creation and promotion of academic programs on indigenous media, the

promotion of indigenous cultures and indigenous political views, among many other commitments (PCCCIAY, 2010: 52-60).

The PCCCIAY represents one of the most important moments for the indigenous media practitioners of the continent since it was the first time they encountered each other to talk exclusively about the challenges, proposals and projections of their specific sector. However, some participants manifested their discontent against the sponsorships for this event. In document read at the closing of the event, a group of participants stated:

(...) We demand a clarification about the role played by institutions, entities and organizations that sponsor this event (...). We wonder how Ecopetrol (...) intends to sell the false idea of being a friendly industry with the planet and the communities, even though they are responsible for destroying mother earth and killing her sons and daughters. These companies have manipulated the consciousness of our brothers and leaders employing false pretenses, lies, and gifts – motorbikes and cattle – in order to take over our territories as has happened to the indigenous communities from Amazonia and Orinoquia (...). In addition, the multinational ISA, other of the sponsors of the event, is responsible for the electrical interconnection of different indigenous territories between different countries of South America, such as Brazil, Bolivia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia and Peru. They are in charge of the hydroelectric project Chivor in Boyacá, the dam San Carlos in Antioquia, and the electrical interconnection Chilca-Platanal between the Pacific coasts with the central Amazonia in Peru. It goes through the nature reserve of Cira, creating serious impacts to “mother earth” and her children. The investment of these institutions and other organizations that fund this event, implies for us, a form of cooptation of our organizations and our spaces for deliberation because these companies impose rules that benefit their interests in retribution to their investment¹¹⁴ (PCCCIAYT, 2010).

¹¹⁴ (...) exigimos que se clarifique el papel que están jugando las instituciones, entidades y organizaciones que patrocinan y financian esta cumbre (...). Nos preguntamos cómo Ecopetrol (...) pretende vender la falsa idea de ser industria amigable con el planeta y con las comunidades siendo ellos los encargados de succionar y desangrar a nuestra madre y masacrar a sus hijos e hijas que bajo engaños y mentiras ofreciendo ganado y motos, han comprado a bajo precio las conciencias de nuestros hermanos y autoridades para que así entreguemos nuestros territorios, como está

Here, we can read how some participants criticized that two powerful energy companies of the nation – Ecopetrol, the semi-private oil company, and ISA, a public interconnection energy company – that were the sponsors of this event. This represented a contradiction, in their view, because these companies have launched development projects that have affected the environment of indigenous and non-indigenous territories. The protestors adds that, in the specific case of Ecopetrol, this company has co-opted indigenous leaders, with motorbikes and cattle, in order to develop its projects within indigenous territories. The economic support of these two companies in this event is seen as another strategy of these companies for coopting indigenous organizations. These protestors also condemned the participation of members of the state in this event:

This is a process of popular participation and construction of our own forms of life, thus we question the direct participation of ministries and government representatives. This government has favored intervention and devastation of our communities and territories; we wonder about the contradictions between our political discourses and the negotiations engaged by our organizations¹¹⁵ (PCCCIAYT, 2010).

ocurriendo en las comunidades indígenas de la Orinoquía y Amazonia colombiana. (...) A parte de esto, la multinacional ISA, una de las patrocinadoras del evento, se encarga de la interconexión eléctrica de distintos territorios entre los países, la cual está dentro de la perspectiva de los proyectos IIRSA en Suramérica, actuando en Brasil, Bolivia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia y Perú; como por ejemplo el proyecto hidroeléctrico de Chivor en Boyacá, la represa San Carlos en Antioquía o la interconexión eléctrica Chilca-Platanal que conecta la costa con la Amazonía central peruana atravesando la reserva natural del Cira, teniendo graves impactos a la pacha mama y sus hijos alrededor de este proyecto. La inversión de las instituciones y organizaciones que financian el evento, implica para nosotros una cooptación de las formas propias para encontrarnos, ya que además de la plata de auspicio, se ponen las reglas del juego bajo sus intereses.

¹¹⁵ Siendo este un proceso de participación popular y de construcción de formas propias de vida, nos cuestionamos la participación de ministerios y representantes directos del gobierno, que se ha hecho elegir bajo las políticas que privilegian la intervención y devastación de nuestras comunidades y sus territorios; nos preguntamos qué está pasando con la negociación por parte de las organizaciones cuando en el discurso hablamos de la exigibilidad de derechos.

Here, the conflict becomes evident between those sectors among the indigenous movement who advocate for exercising their rights by appealing to State institutions and those who consider the State's intervention, especially from entities related to developmental projects, as problematic. Like the Zapatistas, this last group promotes alternative autonomic actions – providing services, organizing events, developing media initiatives, etc. – without resources that compromise their epistemic, political, and social agenda.

The Communication Quilt of the ACIN (TC-ACIN) represents one of those voices within the indigenous movement in Cauca. Even though they were active in the planning and development of the PCCCIAY and other CRIC initiatives, they frequently manifested their disagreement against the sponsors of these events. Since its foundation, the TC-ACIN have developed independently various grassroots initiatives to debate, educate and discuss about various topics, such as the necessity of a communication law for the indigenous people as well as the dangerous progressive bureaucratization of the indigenous organizations. One of these events was the 2010 *Escuela de Comunicacion Rodolfo Maya*. This school, named as an homage to this indigenous media practitioner assassinated that year, brought together more than 100 popular communicators from indigenous communities as well as other rural and urban sectors eight times for the period of one year and half. The participants attended seminars on politics and media, received training on media production, and organized a film festival through Cauca.

TC-ACIN participated in many other spaces where the public policy for indigenous communication was discussed, such as the *Foro sobre Política Pública*

Internacional en el XI Festival Internacional de Cine y Video de los Pueblos Indígenas en Bogotá (Forum on International Public Policy in the XI International Festival of Film and Video of the Indigenous people in Bogota), discussions and workshops organized by the ministries of Culture and Technologies of Information and Communication, and the Primer Foro Nacional de Comunicacion Indigena (First National Forum of Indigenous Communication) in Popayan organized by the Cric in 2012.

Based on this work, Manuel Rozental and Vilma Almendra, two of the founder members of the TC-ACIN, published an article titled “*Política de comunicación desde los pueblos indígenas: Tejidos como alternativas practicas*” (2013). Almendra and Rozental provided a short review of their vision on indigenous communication and the struggle they have been involved to position the topic in the indigenous political agenda. The type of communication caring out by the TC-ACIN, they explain, seeks to counteract the powerful media groups that want the consolidation of a homogenizing capitalist ideology through propaganda. Mass media communication, they add, complements the plan that seeks to destroy indigenous lives, which also includes terror and war, and the legislation for territorial displacement (65-67).

They also explain that their conception of communication is based on the Nasa’s oral and spiritual traditions, which both involve the dialogue with their community and territory. This communication process has adopted external technologies, such as radio, internet and video, in order to develop a movement for resistance, territorial and cultural recovery, and autonomy. Rather than being exclusionist, the TC-ACIN’s communication attempts to exchange knowledge and strengthen relationships with other

indigenous communities and social sectors – such as peasants, blacks, and urban movements – through the *Abya Yala* (Almendra and Rozental, 2013: 68).

In addition to describe their conception of communication, Almendra and Rozental also recognize the progressive involvement of indigenous authorities and organizations into the topic of communication – i.e. the CRIC finally included in their political agenda the topic of communication in 2013. However, they also demand a strong commitment and more political clarity from their authorities. They state that the right of communication implies important political demands towards the life improvement of indigenous people, and cannot be reduced to receiving economic support and equipment:

Yet most of our authorities, indigenous leaders and representatives see communicators as staff useful for logistics, such as installing the sound system for the events, making transcripts, taking pictures, handling the microphones, sending and receiving letters. Communicators must obey orders and repeat solely and uncritically what leaders say. For many people, indigenous communicators should only promote the official voice. Some authoritarians do not allow questioning or criticizing. Therefore they demand that communicators reproduce propaganda, even when leaders act against the processes and their community.

Although many of our authorities have started supporting autonomous communication practices, communication needs more support in order to become an instrument for political transformation and as a fundamental strategy for indigenous resistance (69-70).

The First Continental Summit of Indigenous Communication in La Maria Piendamó in Cauca. Despite many difficulties, it begins to break ground for promoting our sense of communication, for liberating the word related to the territory, and for the appropriation of technologies. It depends on all indigenous peoples to defend this way from tendencies that, excused in the fulfilment of undeniable material needs, pretend to reduce communication only to the

achievement of resources and technology. We must demand our rights and achieve the minimal economic, technical, legal, resources necessary for the consolidation of our indigenous communication¹¹⁶ (75).

Similar to the previous cases, these two paragraphs show the tension between voices within the indigenous movement, such as the TC-ACIN, which project the indigenous movement as an oppositional force to the State and those other voices that have opted for gaining access to some privileges from the State based on their identity differences. One of the most notorious disruptions between the TC-ACIN and more institutionalized sectors within the indigenous organizations happened in 2013, when the latter decided to not participate in the Second Continental Indigenous Communication Summit – IICCC (Segunda Cumbre de Comunicacion Continental) in Mexico.

The TC-ACIN made this decision after *Ojo de Agua*, a Mexican indigenous media producer, declined to participate as a protest for the intervention of the government of Mexico in the finance, organization, and development of this event.

¹¹⁶ Aún la mayoría de nuestras autoridades, dirigentes y representantes indígenas ven a las y a los comunicadores como personal de logística útil para llevar el sonido, para hacer transcripciones, para tomar fotos, para manejar los micrófonos, para recibir y enviar cartas, para obedecer órdenes y para repetir única y exclusivamente y de manera acrítica y obediente lo que ellos dicen. Para muchas y muchos, el comunicador(a) debe limitarse a ser caja de resonancia de la voz oficial. Algunos autoritarios no permiten cuestionar ni criticar y, en consecuencia, exigen que se les haga propaganda aun cuando actúen en contra del proceso y de su comunidad.

Aunque va creciendo la conciencia y la buena voluntad de varias de nuestras autoridades por apoyar los procesos de comunicación autónomos, falta mucho para que respeten el espacio que la comunicación se merece como proceso político de transformación y estrategia fundamental para la resistencia indígena (69-70). I Cumbre de Comunicación Indígena del Continente en el resguardo de La María Piendamó en el Cauca. A pesar de muchas dificultades, empieza a abrirse paso el sentido de comunicar y liberar la palabra tejida al territorio y la combinación de medios propios y apropiados, desde este ámbito de la Cumbre. Depende de todos los pueblos indígenas defender este camino ante tendencias que, aduciendo necesidades prácticas innegables, pretenden reducir la comunicación únicamente a la consecución de recursos y medios tecnológicos. Debemos exigir nuestros derechos que por legitimidad nos pertenecen y lograr los recursos económicos, técnicos, jurídicos... mínimos necesarios para consolidar nuestra comunicación indígena.

According to a press release from Ojo de Agua, the involvement of the Mexican government, headed by Enrique Peña Nieto, had the intention to clean its image affected by denunciations from various organizations about human rights abuses against popular sectors, including the indigenous communities.

For Ojo de Agua, the TC-ACIN and other media producers that decided not to participate in the IICCC, two of the most disturbing issues around the involvement of the Mexican government were the organizers' invitation to Enrique Peña Nieto to open the event – he finally rejected the invitation – and the involvement of the Secretary of Communication and Transportation (Secretaria de Comunicacion y Transportes) in the development of the event. Mexican media producers found the presence of this government institution especially offensive because they are the ones that constantly harass unlicensed indigenous media radios. Ojo de Agua as well as the TC-ACIN clarified that they were not opposed to receiving the support from the State by principle, but they opposed to the use of indigenous events to benefit governments and institutions that violate indigenous rights (Ojo de Agua, 2013 and TC-ACIN, 2013).

Despite the Ojo de Agua's and the TC-ACIN's boycott, the event was finally carried out. Vicente Otero, coordinator of communication and external relations of the CRIC, criticized the decision of the Ojo de Agua and TC-ACIN and stated that the summit's agenda was of the indigenous people, and not of the sponsors – “Lo que nos toca es asumir entre todos (...) porque el rumbo de la cumbre es nuestra no de los financiadores” (Servindi, 2013). This shows, one more time, the tensions between two

sectors within the indigenous people from Cauca: those who prioritize accessing privileges and those who privilege a political and epistemic autonomy.

In relation to the event – which I had the opportunity to attend –, the Colombian delegation was the largest, by far, after the Mexican. Dozens of members of the Colombian indigenous organizations attended workshops, concerts, presentations, and discussions during more than four days at the town of Santa Maria Tlahuitoltepec Mixe, Oaxaca, Mexico. Approximately, the Colombian delegation was made-up by more than ten representatives from the CRIC, more than twenty Misaks – which is not member of the CRIC –, and many others from other indigenous media projects through the nation. In addition to indigenous representatives, the Colombian group was composed by members of ministries, State companies – Ecopetrol – and local NGOs. The large size of the Colombian delegation was especially surprising considering that other delegations were not larger than 5-10 people – i.e. the Bolivian delegation had no more than five representatives. Through short interviews and some informal talks, members of the Colombian delegation assured that their traveling expensive were covered by Colombian governmental institutions.

The question at this point of the discussion is whether or not the IICCCI contributed to the consolidation of communication projects of the indigenous people through the Abya Yala. On one hand, the IICCCI congregated more than 1500 indigenous media practitioners and others involved in this topic from different regions of the continent to exchange experiences, discuss grievances, and consolidate networks. On the other hand, as the final declaration shows, the conclusions, demands, an actions

from this event were not much different than the ones from the first summit in Colombia. For instance, they ratified the participant's commitment with the creation of a continental platform of communication, the creation of a continental school of communication – two actions that are still unfulfilled –, the development of legal frameworks for indigenous communication, and the organization of the IICCCI in 2016, in Bolivia. As a new proposed actions, it is possible to find proposals as general as “rescuing the family values, remaking the role of women, the young, and the kids in the exercise of the territorial and human rights” and as banal as “propose a communication week of the indigenous people and promote an international campaign to spread this right” (IICCCI, 2013: 20).

What is even more problematic about this is that the Mexican government finally used the event to clean its image as Ojo de Agua warned, not only before international organizations, but also before the Mexican people. The Mexican government provided an impressive infrastructure – camp sites, showers, toilets, a large dinner place, medical services, a permanent exhibition on indigenous crafts and art, three enormous concert tents, permanent transportation between locations, and several full color plasma screens, among others. Food, sheets, and sleeping bags were given away at no charge. In addition, national audiences were reached through a daily national television broadcasting in which were showed presentations of folklore groups invited from all around Mexico.

Despite all the expenditures of the Mexican and the Colombian government, these governments did not support communication initiatives that would truly benefit

the indigenous movement at larger scale, such as the network of continental indigenous radio stations. Rather, these government preferred to invest money into events that only benefit a very limited number of leaders. In this political environment, the ONIC signed an agreement with the Ministry of Culture to develop and socialize a communication law proposal for indigenous people.

Agreement 547 of 2013

As part of one of the many rounds of negotiations between indigenous people and the government, the ONIC and the Ministry of the Technologies of Information and Communication concluded the Agreement 547 for the construction of the first public policy for indigenous communication in 2012. For this agreement, the Ministry of Culture provided 900 million pesos (\$ 501,113 approximately) to ONIC for the construction and dissemination of a law proposal with the participation of the other indigenous organizations of Colombia – Org de los Pueblos Indígenas de la Amazonia Colombiana (Opiac), Autoridades Indígenas de Colombia (Aico), Autoridades Tradicionales Indígenas de Colombia, and Confederación Indígena de Tairona (Cit).

For this titanic mission, they formed the National Commission of Communication of Indigenous People (Comisión Nacional de Comunicación de los Pueblos Indígenas – CONCIP) composed of indigenous media practitioners from different regions of Colombia – including members of the Misak Communication Program and the TC-ACIN. According to this agreement, the CONACIP would have to

submit a final law proposal, properly disseminated and accepted by all indigenous authorities of Colombia, by May 2014 (PPCP, 2014: 4).

In addition to all the work and experience accumulated through more than 15 years of working in this topic, the members of the CONCIP constructed the law proposal in several deliberation spaces through 2013 and 2014. This included two round of visits to five macro-regions that covered all the national territory (Caribbean zone, Andes, Pacific south-west, Amazon, and Orinoquia), six other meetings in different areas of Colombia, the national assembly of communication in the Fifth Continental Summit of Indigenous People of Abya Yala (2013), several meetings in Bogota, visits to indigenous media projects, and encounters with members of different state institutions, such as the Ministries of Culture, Education, and TLC, the Programa Presidencial para Pueblos Indígenas (presidential program for indigenous people), the Autoridad Nacional de Televisión, ANTV (National Television Authority), the Agencia Nacional del Espectro Electromagnético (National Agency of Electromagnetic Spectrum), and Dirección Nacional de Derechos de Autor (the National Direction of Copyrights) (PPCP, 2014:10).

In the midst of this process (June, 2013), the TC-ACIN decided not to participate anymore in this process, renouncing to their place in the Mesa Nacional de Comunicación (national communication roundtable) and in the CONCIP – both positions granted in a consultation with media programs through the nation. According to a press release, the TC-ACIN renounced this process for what they considered as a lack of autonomy:

In the TC-ACIN we feel that there have been many difficulties that have disrupted the task of our colleagues who participate in the construction of the communication policy. At different meetings, they have expressed concerns for the time constraints imposed by State's institutions and for the necessity to create a communication law that response to the needs of the people. This effort has been hampered by some people inside and outside the territory. The members of the TC-ACIN who have participated in this process have also been placed in charge of personal responsibilities of other members of the group, when it is well known that they are there just for representing the TC-ACIN¹¹⁷.

Although the document does not provide details on specific incidents, it makes clear that the people from the TC-ACIN were not comfortable with the bureaucratic organization of this process. One of the grievances many participants of this process stated to me was the time constraints of the agreement. In less than two years, the technical team of the CONCIP had to compile different views, conceptions, and needs on communication, make corrections to the document, and publicize the results to more than 100 indigenous cultures through the nation.

Despite these internal divisions and the hardships in the development of such a monumental task, CONCIP finished and submitted a 73 page law proposal that discusses the importance of a communication law for indigenous people. It also describes the methodology and theoretical framework, and discusses its four main structural components: forms of indigenous communication, media technologies

¹¹⁷ Desde el Tejido sentimos que han sido muchas las dificultades que no han permitido desarrollar el trabajo de nuestras compañeras en las mesas y en la política de comunicación. Ellas en diferentes reuniones han manifestado la preocupación por trabajar en un equipo autónomo que no responda solamente a la lógica institucional y se preocupe por elaborar una política de comunicación desde los pueblos y para los pueblos. Este esfuerzo ha sido obstaculizado por algunas personas dentro y fuera del territorio y a nuestras compañeras les han atribuido responsabilidades personales cuando es bien sabido que representan al Tejido de Comunicación.

incorporated into the indigenous world – radio, audiovisuals and television, and news press, plan for training of indigenous media practitioners, and guarantees and rights for indigenous communication (PPCP, 2014: 52).

In general terms, the final document includes various controversial points. First, this law project would only focus on indigenous communication, excluding other sectors traditionally marginalized by mass media – i.e. blacks, peasant mestizos, and working class. This type of legal privileges and exclusions have increased interethnic conflicts, creating divisions between social sectors. The government, in turn, has taken advantage of this situation as in the case of the 2013 National Agrarian Strike that I mentioned before.

Second, this proposal would not tackle directly broader problems of the Colombian mass media, such as excessive monopolization and the overall exclusion of popular sectors. Third, the proposal would create legal frameworks and dependencies for activities that are part of their cultural traditions. For instance, the proposal contain points related to the reinvigoration of indigenous “spiritual communication”, the strength of spaces for thought and dialogue, and the dissemination of indigenous principles, such as solidarity and autonomy (53). As it is illustrated in the theoretical discussion on autonomy, involving indigenous issues into the State logics is a double-edged sword, which could provide some legal guarantees for indigenous rights, but could strengthen the governance of the State over indigenous people.

Finally, the application of such a law implies a large investment, considering its large scope. In addition to the support of “spiritual communication”, training for

indigenous media practitioners, development, and permanent support of media production and distribution, it also creates new State institutions to oversee mass media and develop indigenous media. As a solution, the proposal contemplated the creation of new taxes – on mobile phone services – and the contribution of existing State institutions, such as Colciencias and the National System of Loyalties (Sistema Nacional de Regalias). This would potentially increase tensions with other excluded sectors, which might consider unfair contributing to a law that not benefit them directly. Even worse, the Colombian State finances this type of social welfare policies with royalties from the extractive sector, especially oil production (El Pais, 2016). Relying on the State to finance epistemic practices, therefore, resulted in a very contradictory cycle that involves the necessity to further even more environmentally problematic developmental projects.

Regardless of difficulties and contradictions, this indigenous communication law proposal represented an interesting step towards the democratization of media, as well as the promotion, access and consolidation of alternative media projects from disenfranchised sectors of the Colombian population. However, this law proposal did not even have the chance to be discussed in congress: this proposal was rejected by the four national indigenous organizations participants other than ONIC – OPIAC, AICO, Autoridades Tradicionales Indígenas de Colombia, and CIT – one day before the deadline for submitting the document to the Ministry of TICs. Through a press release, these organizations complained at the leading role of the ONIC in the whole process.

They disagreed with the methodology employed by the ONIC, for limiting the participation of the authorities and communities they represented.

These organizations also complained of being excluded from the administration and control of the funding involved in this agreement. Concretely, they argued that ONIC did not provide reports over funding spent, they found unfair that the government left them outside this administrative process, and they complained against the government for not providing extra funding directly to them for disclosing the proposal to their communities. At the end of their press release, they stated:

(..) we do not approve any proposal related to a public policy for indigenous communications until the fulfilment of the commitment for providing greater awareness and participation within the communities we represent.¹¹⁸

The Ministry of TICs finally refused to provide extra funding to these four indigenous organizations, meaning the culmination of this process. The hard work, effort, and hopes from many grassroots indigenous communicators were truncated for the avarice of few members of indigenous organizations, who joined the discussion about “indigenous communication” just when resources became involved.

Conclusion

Through the analysis of the evolution of the discussion on legislation for indigenous media, this chapter shows the conflict between two main sectors within the

¹¹⁸ (..) no aprobamos ningún proceso que se esté llevando a cabo en material de política pública en comunicaciones para los Pueblo indígenas hasta tanto se cumplan los compromisos acordados de generar un mayor conocimiento y participación del tema en nuestras comunidades.

indigenous movement in Cauca: those who seek administrative autonomy and those who prioritize autonomic visions beyond the administration of services with funding from the State. As is shown, there are some positive outcomes from the participation in administrative practices for indigenous organizations. For instance, they have some more control and participation over the services, such as health and education, they have acquired some level of political power at local level, and they have been able to create their own institutions for territorial control, such as the *Guardia Indigena*.

However, this administrative autonomy has also enforced the State control over indigenous people. For instance, Santos' government has used resources as an instrument to obtain the political support of indigenous people at time of elections – i.e. the case of the 2014 Santos' reelection – and, even worse, these resources have been used by the State as instrument for creating divisions between indigenous people and other sectors in order to undermine popular mobilization – i.e. at the 2013 Farmers Strike.

More than “autonomy”, administrative autonomy has meant the incorporation of indigenous organization into the State apparatus via decentralization. This State's decentralization, promoted by the Santos administration, has resulted a more effective form of neoliberal control over the indigenous movement because it has created divisions and conflicts. Ironically, this has proved more effective in order to control indigenous organizations than the coercive tactics employed by the government of Uribe Velez.

The development of events made clear that this is not a simple temporal political conjuncture. Rather, we could see the enormous transformation in the relation between indigenous movement and the State. During the Uribe Velez presidency, the indigenous movement was highly harassed and persecuted. As a response, the indigenous movement minimized dialogues and became one of the strongest oppositional forces against Uribe's regime. Once Juan Manuel Santos became president, this situation radically changed. He approached the indigenous movement in a more conciliatory and inclusive tone, at least in appearance, to the point that the indigenous movement decided to support his candidacy for presidential reelection. The political change towards the indigenous movement from Santos was part of his strategy to gain support for his peace negotiations with the leftist guerrillas to end Colombian long conflict – the longest in the last hundred years in Latin America – and to pave the way for a post-conflict scenario, in which several development projects in areas controlled by the guerrillas – many of them with large indigenous populations – are planned.

The paradox of this political scenario, where indigenous organizations and the State established a more conciliatory relationship, has brought new complicated challenges and divisions within the indigenous movement. Once unified for resisting the authoritarianism of Uribe Velez, the indigenous movement is becoming deeply divided between those who pursue a more administrative autonomy and those who consider autonomy beyond the administration of some economic resources.

As this paper shows, the tension becomes evident through the analysis of the development of the discussion on a law for indigenous communication. After years of

work and discussion of grassroots indigenous media practitioners, who have been involved with media production within their communities, the national indigenous organizations – many of them based on Bogotá – decided to block a communication law proposal just for the economic ambitions of few leaders.

But, every cloud has a silver lining. If this proposed law project had been approved, it is very likely that the State would have increased its control over indigenous' practices, and indigenous people their dependency on State institutions. As is explained in the discussion on autonomy in this chapter and illustrated in chapter 4 through the case of indigenous people and radios of public interest, this type of State legal interventions represents dangerous double-edged swords: laws have historically opened some opportunities for indigenous contestation and resistance, but they have also created new forms of domination.

As we will see in the next chapter, those who seek the construction of an autonomy different than the administrative one know that their only possibility to consolidate indigenous movement as a political, economic and epistemic alternative is by promoting their goals with the minimal intervention of the State – since these indigenous alternatives are opposed to the developmental agenda of the neoliberal State. For this reason, they have promoted communication practices, not based on the administration of money and resources, but to strength the indigenous world at epistemic level – as we will see in chapter six.

Chapter 6

Returning to the Roots: Indigenous Epistemology and Communication in Times of “Inclusion”.

As we have seen through this dissertation, the indigenous movement has gained significant political spaces within the national political spectrum in Colombia in the last 45 years. For instance, indigenous organizations have established a continuous and direct dialogue with State's institutions, the decentralization of the State has allowed indigenous people to participate in the administration of public resources at local level, and indigenous people have acquired permanent representation in national congress. Even though the significance of these spaces is undeniable, there are also negative consequences for this political inclusion. As I showed in detail in chapter five through the analysis of the situation around the topic of indigenous communication, political inclusion has also increased the neoliberal governance over the indigenous movement via boureocratization and cooptation of indigenous organizations.

Chapter five also discuss how some dissident voices within indigenous movement are looking for methods to counteract this form of political inclusion. This movement, which is taking strengthen through the continent, seeks the reconstruction of the epistemes (see introduction) from the Abya Yala – the name for America from the Kuna culture, settled in Panama and Colombia. This seeks to reformulate the form in which the *people* who have been subjectified as ‘indigenous’ engage in politics, among other aspects of their lives. In order to pursue this epistemological agenda,

different cultures of the Abya Yala have engaged in different communicational practices, including radio as well as many other large range of methods.

Following this agenda, this chapter presents a communicative work developed by three Misak students from Guambia and myself. This communicative initiative, like many of this kind, is neither an instrument for persuasion – as was in the case of Radio Sutatenza – nor a goal by itself – as it has been the case of many of the community radio stations in Cauca. Rather, this type of communicative initiative is better described as a “communicative process” through which the reconstruction of indigenous epistemes is intended. The specific work discussed here consists in the elaboration and discussion of 39 drawings that represent historical instances, social problems and cultural features of the Misak society. This is a product of a process that lasted more than year and half, and involved dozens of collaborators. Before explaining this work, I discuss the political and philosophical difficulties that an epistemic reconstruction of indigenous people encounters. Following, I introduce the discussion on the epistemology of the people from the Andes – the region in which is rooted the Misak culture –, focusing on the explanation of the concept of *parity* – dominant in Andes’ cultures including the Misak’s.

Difficulties in the (re)construction of the epistemology of the Andes

Two main problems challenge the epistemic (re)construction of cultures, such as the one of the peoples from Andes: one political and another philosophical. In relation to the political problem, this task would target directly one of the political tools

effectively used by the indigenous movement to gain political spaces during the era of multiculturalism: strategic essentialism. Dourish (2008), citing Spivak (1987), explains that strategic essentialism is a political strategy employed by subordinated groups that put differences aside and forge a sense of collective identity in order to make political, social, and economic gains. In the case of indigenous people, they have put aside the particularities of their different identities and have assumed a group identity in order to gain political recognition and become recognized as a homogeneous political force.

The Colombian indigenous people have employed strategic essentialism tactics in order to gain access to the national political sphere and forge political alliances, especially since the formation of the first indigenous organizations in the 1970s. For instance, despite their cultural and political differences, the Misak and Nasas introduced themselves as a unified force at the moment of the creation of the Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca, Cric in 1971.

Since the 1970s, indigenous organizations, such as the CRIC and others, became involved with ecological causes, not only because they were directly affected by environmental degradation, but also as a political strategy to consolidate strategic alliances and build sympathies among progressive sectors of the Colombian society (Ulloa, 2011: 10). As a result, the indigenous people have been labeled by different local and international organizations, such as United Nations, as “the guardians of the earth” (Giraldo, 2012).

There are many different examples of the intervention of indigenous people in environmental causes. The U'wa people, for instance, have gained national and international recognition for contesting oil exploitation projects in various regions of Colombia, such as Santander, Boyacá, and Northern Santander (17). This is similar to the case of the Misak and Nasa people, who are recognized for their resistance against illegal mining, the sugar cane industry, and the aerial fumigation on “illegal” crops – marihuana, coca, and poppy (Caracol Radio, 2016; Acin, 2016; and Izquierdo, 2002).

Even though the involvement of the indigenous movement with the ecological cause brought positive outcomes – i.e. establishing relationships with other sectors, reaching new spaces for political deliberation, forging sympathies beyond the indigenous world, and consolidating their image as “guardians of the earth” –, this political strategy has also brought negative consequences. According to Ulloa (2011), it resorts to the myth of indigenous people as “noble savages”, constructs the idea of indigenous societies as pre-modern for their closeness to nature, leaves the complicated responsibility of protecting the environment to underfunded indigenous organizations, and promotes an “eco-governmentality” and “eco-discipline” over indigenous people and their territories (26-28).

A similar panorama is described by Del Castillo (2001) and Coulthard (2014) in relation to strategic essentialism and women rights in Mexico and Canada respectively. In both countries, the State have recognized sets of rights for indigenous people based on their cultural differences. However, the State recognition has also limited and undermined a series of individual rights, especially for indigenous women, who have

traditionally faced discrimination from State's institutions, civil society, and even within their communities. The preservation of gender roles and other essentialized traditions is, in great part, the source of this social oppression against indigenous women.

Ulloa's (2001), Castillo's (2011) and Coulthard's (2014) critical views invite us to understand essentialism as an important, but complex and paradoxical political strategy. For instance, it is important to reevaluate essentialism to understand, among other things, the role of the colonial regime in the promotion of problematic "traditions" and the negative political implications of some anti-essentialist discourses that pretend to disband indigenous rights based on the denial of indigenous differences. Considering the limited and paradoxical success of the essentialist political approach, various scholars urge for seeking other political strategies, such as the reconstruction of indigenous epistemes (Castillo, 2011; Macas, 2005; Walsh, 2007).

The reconstruction of indigenous epistemes, however, is a strategy that not all sectors within indigenous world support. For instance, as Caviedes (2002) explains, during its first years, the Cric endured an internal clash between a "trade union tendency", which promoted an essentialist political agenda to position the organization in the national political landscape, and a "indigenous tendency" that prioritized the (re)construction of indigenous epistemes. On one hand, the union tendency, leaded by various non-indigenous and some indigenous people with experience in leftist movements, envisioned the future of the Cric as a homogeneous Marxist political entity that would pursue economic structural transformations for the entire nation. This tendency was strongly influenced by the leftist student movement and the National

Association of Peasants – Asociacion de Usuarios Campesinos, ANUC (Sincelejo) (Caviedes, 2002: 245).

In general terms, the trade union tendency understood the indigenous people as a potentially revolutionary class, since they were one of the most excluded sectors of the Colombian society at that moment. They saw indigenous people as doubly oppressed, for their position in the chain of production – as peasants without land – and for their cultural identity – as indigenous people. In other words, this tendency considered indigenous traditions as impediments for the development of this population (240). In order to gain recognition and support, this tendency essentialized the indigenous world as a homogeneous and oppressed sector that needed the aid from other leftist organization to overcome their disadvantaged socio-economic situation and their indigenous identity.

On the other hand, the Cric's "indigenous tendency" considered necessary and politically important the reconstruction of indigenous cultures. In 1981, they left the Cric and founded a dissident organization called Indigenous Authorities in Movement – Autoridades Indígenas en Marcha. This organization focused on the recovery of some indigenous cultural concepts, such as *authority* and *territory*, in order to reconstruct community sense and individual self-esteem (Cavides, 2002: 242).

These dissidents summarized their political project in the *Manifiesto Guambiano*, one of the most important political documents of the Misak community. In the last phrase of this document, for instance, they explain the importance of the idea of

territory for their projection of the indigenous movement: recovering the land to recover everything: authority, justice, and work (recuperar la tierra, para recuperarlo todo: autoridad, justicia, trabajo). According to Maria Teresa Fidji (Fidji interview, 2015), a sociology professor who militated in this group, this phrase intended to show that their political agenda projected, not the simple return to the land to indigenous hands, but the reconstruction of a territory in which indigenous cultures could bloom again.

As Caviedes (2002) also explain, indigenous grassroots progressively reshaped the vision and the goals of the Cric (256). As a result, this organization became more sympathetic towards the particularities of indigenous identity, leaving aside their original projection as a “trade union” organization. As a result, many former members of the dissident group that pursued cultural recognition, such as Maria Teresa Fidji and Joanne Rappaport, ended working again with the Cric. Even though the Cric and the *cabildo de Guambia* – that leaved the Cric in 1981 – have carried out a series of actions to strengthen indigenous traditions since the 1980s, there is still a need for work towards the reconstruction of the Misak and Nasa epistemes. They have to confront that some of their traditions –i.e. the importance of mother earth for indigenous people – have been essentialized, exploited and oversimplified in order to gain a political voice at regional, national, and international levels.

In relation to the second difficulty that the reconstruction of indigenous epistemes endures – the philosophical problem –, some academics and intellectuals are reluctant to accept the idea of considering indigenous knowledges as “philosophies”. For instance, Sobrevilla (2008) criticizes academics works, such as Estermann’s “La

Filosofía Andina”, that aim to show the philosophical roots of the Andean communities. Sobrevilla explains that these type of works lack of evidence on claims, such as relational character between the people from the Andes and their environment, and the superiority of the Andean philosophy over the western philosophy. In the specific case of Estermaan, Sobrevilla complains of the lack of clarity on basic terms, such as “philosophy” and “people from the Andes” (238-241).

Sobrevilla (2008) considers as fallacious the idea that the people from pre-hispanic cultures developed a philosophical thought. Following Kant, he states that pre-hispanic cultures – especially from the area of the Andes – did developed a broad sense of philosophy. He recognized that they had considerations about the meaning of life, mankind, God, etc. –, but he does not consider this thinking structured nor historic for various reasons, such as the influence of tradition and religion, its mythological orientation, its lack of grounded reason, and its lack of orientation towards finding truths (243).

Using Mosterin’s six differences between archaic thought from philosophy, Sobrevilla sustain his argument about the inferiority of the Andean thought: (1) archaic thought, as the one of the people from the Andes, goes directly to the analysis of an object without previously considering its own linguistic and methodological subjective conditions; (2) it treats all phenomena from an emotional perspective rather than from objective perspective; (3) it treats phenomena as a supernatural rather than attempting to conceptualize it; (4) it creates myths rather than rational hypothesis; (5) it promotes the relationship with supernatural forces through cults and offerings; and (6) it promotes

the engagement with rituals to release the anxiety for the future (246). Even though Mosterin believes that people with archaic thought had have the capacity to develop some advanced cognitive features, such as writing, arithmetic, and calendars, he assures that they lack of the rational-philosophical thinking similar to the developed during the 6th century (BC) in India, China, and Greece (246). In summary, Sobrevilla – based on Kant and Mosterin – qualifies the pre-hispanic thought as pre-modern.

Even though many qualify pre-hispanic/indigenous knowledge as pre-modern, there is another scholarship that proposes a completely different approach on pre-hispanic thought. This scholarship is currently proposing the reconstruction of pre-hispanic epistemes from diverse angles, such as geometry, architecture, literature, linguistics, archeology, philosophy, astronomy, among others areas. This has been a very difficult task due to the epistemological violence of the Spanish conquest, which in addition to lives, suppressed and destroyed unnumbered of cultural expressions, such as temples, codices, and, in the case of the Andes, thousands of *quipus*, their system of recording data. Despite the difficulty, scholars such as Portilla (2006) have demonstrated the richness and complexity of the thought of the pre-hispanic Nahuatl people through the analysis of the few codices that the Spanish did not destroy and the work of the Spanish chroniclers. After its analysis, Portilla – as well as many others – are convinced that the pre-hispanic people developed philosophy and that that traces of this philosophy are still alive among the native cultures.

In the case of the Andes, it is possible to find scholarship that seeks the (re)construction of the philosophy of the region. This is a (re)construction because it

intends to understand its roots and principles, but also attempts to make them contemporary to the people's current context. In the case of the Misak people, it is possible to find works, such as “En el Segundo Día, la Gente Grande (Numisak) Sembró la Autoridad y las Plantas y, con su Jugo Bebió el Sentido” (Hurtado, Aranda, and Vasco: 1993), “Guambianos: Hijos del Aroiris y el Agua (Hurtado, Aranda, and Vasco: 1998), and “La Voz de Nuestros Mayores” (Dagua, Tunubala, Varela, and Mosquera: 2002). As I develop further later, the work we carried with the students of the Misak University seeks to contribute to this epistemic (re)construction. In order to ground the discussion on the Andean episteme, I provide an introduction of what some scholars from the Andes believe are the roots of the philosophy of their culture. This gives us the opportunity to contextualize the Misak thought as part of a broader Andean philosophy. In order to do this, I am paying special attention to the concept of parity.

From Geometry to Philosophy in the Andes

As Perez (1996) explains, all human cultures employ the contrast of opposed pairs as a cognitive way to create meaning – i.e. black-white, good-bad, man-nature, etc. However, there are some societies where all social, political, and economic structures are organized in pairs. The importance of duality for those societies is such that the relations that appear to not be dual are explain as results of dialectical relationships between two entities. This is the case of the Andean society, according to Perez (2).

Lajo (2013) refutes Perez's (1996) analysis stating that the concept of duality does not entirely describe the Andean culture. Lajo explains that the idea of duality implies opposition between two entities. This type of opposition is common in systems of thought, such as the westerner, that are based on a logic commanded by unity. As explained before, unities need an antagonist relationship with an oppositional other in order to create meaning. For this reason, Lajo prefers to categorize the Andean culture as a "parity society" (*sociedad paritaria*). In the parity system, entities have a complementary, rather than antagonistic relationship between each other (168). For Lajo, the idea of parity commands the science, gender roles, ethics, culture, and arts of the people from the Andes. As a result, he considers it the first law of the Andean thought (81).

According to Milla (2008), the parity character of the Andean cultures come from their astronomic observations to Southern Cross (*la Cruz Del Sur*) constellation. The pre-Incas and Incas became intrigued with this constellation due to its particularities, such as the diagonal of the square that form its shortest and longest sides make the square root of two and its longest side points towards the South Pole (Milla, 11: 2008).

Based on the analysis of the symbols found at several archeological sites that dated more than 5 thousand years, Milla (2008) proves the influence of the Southern Cross in the Andean system of thought. As Milla shows through several examples, the pre-hispanic Andean cultures developed their mathematic system from two basic geometrical principles: the square and the circle. These two foundational principles, in

turn, are the base of the square cross, a representation of the Southern Cross constellation. He explains the square cross in these terms:

It is a geometric figure used to organize mathematical and cosmic concepts in the Andean world. This is concluded from its continued presence in sacred places and in the ritual objects. Its form is originated from a geometric development, which takes as its starting point a unitary square, which by the growth of successive diagonals, allow to determine quite accurately the value of "Katari", called "Pi" in the West, and makes from this irrational number a distinct Geometric Mathematical System (Milla, 13: 2008).¹¹⁹



Figure 6.1: The square cross at Puma Punku, Tiwanaku.
<http://blog.world-mysteries.com/science/nazca-lines-enigma-of-the-sun-star-and-cross-mandala/>

Milla concludes that this Geometric Mathematic System (GMS) influenced all aspects of the life of Andean people, from their religious beliefs up to their complex socio-economic structures, and allowed them to achieve extraordinary scientific accomplishments, such as observatory maps of the Milky Way (i.e. Amaru Orcco de

¹¹⁹ Es una figura geométrica utilizada como símbolo "ORDENADOR" de los conceptos cósmicos matemáticos en el mundo andino. Su presencia continua en los recintos sagrados y en los objetos rituales permite hacer esta afirmación. Su forma se origina de un desarrollo geométrico, que toma como punto de partida a un cuadrado unitario que, al crecer por diagonales sucesivas, permite determinar con bastante exactitud el valor de "Katari", llamado "Pi" en Occidente y conformar con este número irracional un Sistema Geométrico Matemático (Milla, 13: 2008)

Montesierpe), “mirrows” of the stellar constellations (i.e. Nazca Lines), and the construction of cities with complex systems of water management (i.e. Machu Pichu).

Years after the first publication of Milla’s groundbreaking work in 1979, Javier Lajo (2003) analyzed the traces of the GMS system at the Andean Road System *Qhapaq Ñan* (the line of the truth), that covers more than six thousand kilometers and that was declared by the UNESCO as a world heritage site in 2014. Based on the findings of the archeologist Maria Sholten, Lajo explains that the road has some particular characteristics that shows the scientific and religious bases of the Inca civilization. For instance, the road forms a straight line inclined 45 grades in relation to the axis north-south. Over this line, the Incas erected some of their most important cities, such as Cajamarca, Cusco, Pukara, Tiawanako, Oruro and Potosi. It is possible to find circled and squared monuments through all this road. The circle ones are known as representations of the “pachamama” (a female figure) and the squares of the “pachatata” (a male figure) (82).

Lajo (2013) also explains that the Tawa Paqua (incorrectly known as Chakana), one of the principal symbols of the Andean cultures, is formed by the addition of circles and squares in this way:

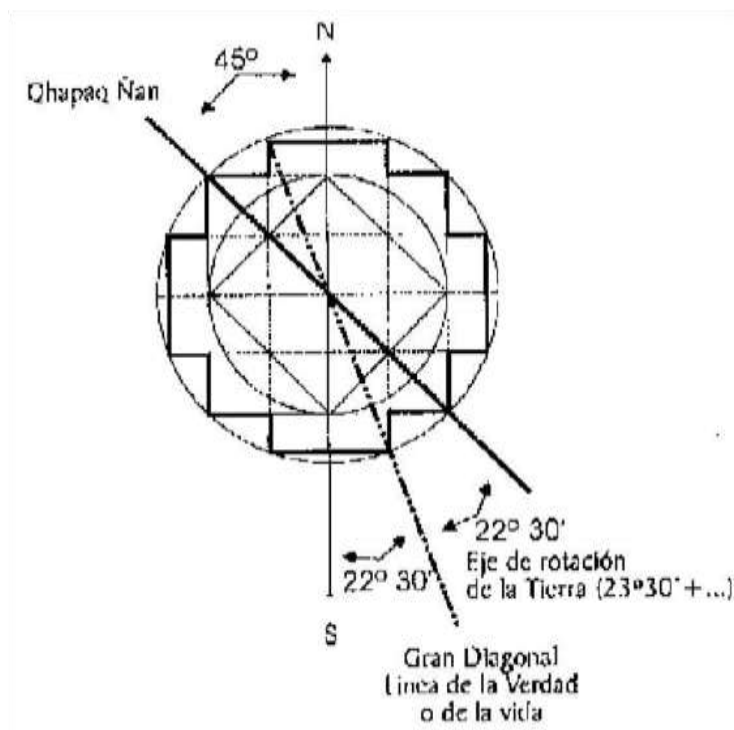


Figure 6.2:Tawa Panqua

As the graphic shows, once we cross a line from the upper left side of the left square down to the center of the Tawa Quapa – the principal mathematical referent of the Andean GMS –, we obtain a 45 degree angle in relation to the lines north-south and east-west. This 45 degree line – Qhapaq Ñan – is approximately two times the Earth's axial tilt (23.2~). The earth oscillation over this axial makes possible the life as we know it. Lajo (2013) argues that the Quapaq Ñan road was designed and built in order to prevent a polar shift – cataclysm known by the Incas as *Pachacuti* – that could disrupt the equilibrium on the earth (92).

This brief explanation about the importance of the square and the circle for the Inca culture intends to show the scientific and religious roots and implications of the

idea parity in the Andean world. As we could see, strong evidence show that the Andean parity view is grounded on well-developed mathematic-scientific roots.

Even though the philosophy of the Andes has suffered from centuries of negation and exclusion, many of its traces are still alive among the indigenous communities of this region. Their language is one of the places where we still continue perceiving the importance of the idea of parity. Looking at the divisions and fragmentations that politics of inclusion has brought to the indigenous movement and the crisis of communicational model in which were based the community radio stations created in the 1990s, many people have launched communicative initiatives that contribute to the (re)construction of those philosophical principles to strength all aspects of the life of these communities. Following, I contextualize the stands of this new communicative proposal and later I will describe the work carried with the students from the Misak University.

Communication as a Process

In recent years, indigenous people, academics and researchers, aware of the theoretical and practical limitations of communication for development (Radio Sutatenza) and communication for social change (community radio stations) models, started to propose other communicative approaches in order to promote intercultural and internal communication in relation to indigenous cultures. One of the first of these experiences was developed in the 1980s by members of the *solidary* movement in Colombia, and it was called *mapas parlantes*.

As Vasco (2012) explains, during the mid-1970s the authorities of the resguardo de Jambalo asked Victor Daniel Bonilla, one of the leaders of the Cric's who leaned towards the reconstruction of identity as political tool, to craft an educational book that allowed the youth members of their community to understand the causes of the violence in this area. After archival work and interviews, Bonilla and other members of the solidary movement crafted the educational book "*Historia Política de los Paeces*" (Political History of the Paeces). According to Vasco, this title itself caused negative reactions from sectors that considered problematic the idea that pre-hispanic cultures – which some had considered as pre-modern – had the capacity of engage in politics. Among these contradictors were those who projected the indigenous organizations as a sort of trade union organization (7). Despite the opposition, the book was very well received by the people of Jambalo and by those who deemed as fundamental the (re)construction of indigenous history for the indigenous political project.

Two maps from this book caused a great impacted among people from Jambalo – "Las Guerras de Liberación Indígena" (The Indigenous Liberation Wars) and "El País Paez" (The Paez Country). They showed how the Paez's (Nasa) history is embedded in and related to their territory (Vasco, 7: 2012). This contributed to understanding territory as an entity beyond the place occupied by the house and their neighborhood. Territory, in this context, is all the space where community life develops (8).

These two initial maps were much more pedagogically effective than the text because many of the members of the community were illiterate. For this reason, the indigenous authorities requested amplified copies of the maps to carry on educational

campaigns within their territory. Due to the success of these two initial maps, the *solidarios* and some indigenous leaders continued documenting other aspects of the Nasa culture in this format. As Fidji and Bonilla (1986) and Vasco (2012) explain, mapas parlantes were not simple reconstructions of the Nasa's history, but they were tools for discussing the events that have affected their lives and forging community consciousness among indigenous people. In fact, more than provoking simple discussions, these maps promoted cognitive exercise where artifacts – quilts, tools, rocks, etc. – were displayed, audios were played, and walks were organized in order to create, add or delete narratives about the history of those societies.

Communicative proposals, such as mapas parlantes, and the limitation of traditional views on community media, such as “communication for development” and “communication for social change”, inspired various scholars and indigenous people to find new theoretical communicative approaches. For instance, Barraquero and Saez (2014), Contreras (2014), Ayala (2011) and some other scholars have promoted a communication model called “communication for good living” (*comunicacion para el buen vivir*). This model is inspired in indigenous discourses that seek alternatives to modern development and its environmental consequences, such as the Quechua's concept of *sumak kausay* (*buen vivir*) and the Aymara's *sumaq quamaya* (*vivir bien*) (Hidalgo, 2014).

In order to show the difference between “communication for social change” and “communication and good living”, I discussed five differences of these concepts discussed by Barraquero and Saez (2014). First, “communication for social change”

assumes the need to place communication at service of something else – i.e. development, health, environment, peace, etc. In contrast, the ecologist and post-developmental critique embedded into the idea of “good living” liberates communication from projects beyond its own process. In other words, communication is no longer an instrument for something else. Rather, it becomes a process – medium and end – for finding a sustainable existence. Second, “communication for social change” continues the modernist and functionalist view of communication as a tool for development, growth, and improvement. “Communication for good living”, on the other hand, prioritizes equilibrium and harmony. As a result, post-development concepts, such as preservation and anti-development, are defended and promoted. Third, “communication for social change” focuses on social improvement, relegating other important aspects of the human experience, such as the economic, the political, and the cultural. “Communication and good living”, in contrast, seeks to establish dialogue to promote sustainable forms of living that involve all aspects of human experience. Fourth, “communication and buen vivir” prioritizes the understanding and respect of nature, differently than “communication for social change”, which is rooted in the traditional anthropocentric vision of communication. Finally, “communication and buen vivir” is not limited to the development of mass media. Rather, it considers different methodologies, including but not exclusive to radio and video, due to its consideration of local realities (Barraquero and Saez, 2014: 50-58).

Pictogram of Misak Communication

Based on the principle of communication as a process and inspired by the *mapas parlantes*, three Misak students from the Misak University – a community organized educational project developed by the Misaks and external academics in Guambia – and myself decided to carry a communicative project called Pictograma de la Comunicacion Misak (PCM).

This project started when I recruited Rosa Maria Montano, John Montano and Liliana Camayo to initially work researching the role of the community's radio station, Namuy Wam, in the cabildo of Guambia in November 2013. We started carrying out interviews and collecting documents at the archives of the cabildo and the radio station. This work showed us that, even though people recognized the important role of the radio station as an instrument to diffuse information, the Misak people had become progressively dissatisfied with this communication project due to its elevated costs, its instability, the poor quality of its media production, among other problems discussed in detail in Chapter three. In contrast, we also realized that many Misaks were very interested on finding communication tools that allow them to share and learn about their culture, history, and traditions.

Looking at this panorama, we decided to carry out a communicational project that would contribute to satisfy the communicative necessities and desires of the Misak community. After analyzing various alternatives, we learned about the great political and cultural impact *mapas parlantes* had for the Nasa and the Misak people in the 1980s, and we decided to emulate some aspects of this methodology, such as the collective methodology of collecting information, the importance of graphic representation, the

necessity of receiving constant feedback from the people, and the involvement of a large number of people in the project.

In August 2014, after collecting an important amount of information from secondary sources and carrying out various interviews with people from different sectors of the Misak society – leaders, elders, professors, young people, evangelicals, etc. –, we started planning and drawing the images that later would compose the PCM. After reading and listening about the extraordinary changes resulted from the 1991 Colombian Constitution for the Misak community, we decided that the PCM must be divided in two: the first half that represents the era before the 1991 Constitution. It was named “the Era of Exclusion”, since this constitution represent the point of history when the Misak finally acquired full citizenship and other political, social, and economic rights based on the ethnic condition. The second half of the PCM, in contrast, was named the “Era of Inclusion”. It was also decided that in these two eras were divided by a drawing commemorating the participation of the Misak Lorenzo Muelas in the 1991 Constitutional Assembly. That drawing became the center of the PCM in which two spirals that represents the two cycles of the Misak time – rolling up and rolling out – meet.



Figure 6.3: Infograma

After deciding the organization of the PCM, myself and the three Misak students picked the topics that would be included in this work and decided an initial plan for each illustration based on the collected information. Rosa Maria Montano, the artist of our group, started drawing the first illustrations and the others in the group, including myself and some eventual collaborators, colored them.



Figure 6.4: The making

The final result of the PCM – including the style and the drawings – changed dramatically in comparison to the first sketches. These changes obeyed to the suggestions made by the community leaders we constantly consulted. Based on their comments, we corrected, deleted, included, or modified these illustrations. Some of

them were modified and even completely changed several times. For this reason, we took more than seven months to finish these 39 illustrations.

Once we finished these illustrations and printed the PCM, we started to show this work at different spaces, including various schools, the Misak University, community meetings, and even in two events at universities located in Popayán and Bogotá. In general, this work served as instrument for recording and diffusing information about historical events that many people in the community, including some elders, did not know, such as the bonanza of the cinchona tree's bark in the 19th century. The PCM was also useful to teach students about the chronology of some of the most important events of the community, such as the history of the creation of the indigenous organizations in the 1970s and the posterior recovery of the Misak territory in the 1980s.



Figure 6.5: Displaying our work

The PCM also worked as tool to provoke conversations and debates between leaders and elders of the community. For instance, the images about the intervention of the Catholics and evangelicals in the community caused some controversy. While some Misaks considered the intervention of these external organizations as a symbol of oppression, others understood it as positive since those missionaries brought educational

institutions, agricultural technologies, and some forms of law enforcement that the State did not provide – see Chapter Four for more details about the evangelical and catholic intervention in the Misak community. In any case, even when we disagree with the opinions and criticism on the PCM, we found very enriching those moments of controversy, discussion, and debate around these illustrations.

We finally represented 39 of the most important moments of the Misak history. Overall, we accomplished to illustrate and record those historical moments, to create an accessible reference about these events, and to illustrate those events from the perspectives of many people from different sectors of the Misak society. Due to the curiosity provoked by these illustrations, it is permanently displayed at the headquarters of the radio station. In addition, we consider that this work contributes to demonstrate that it is possible to carry communicative work with limited economic resources. Unfortunately, as mentioned in Chapter Two, Misak community, as well as many other indigenous communities, are becoming more dependent on external funding for developing all sorts of projects. By illustrating the problems that brought this type of dependency – one illustration discusses this topic – and showing that it is possible to do things without external funding, the PCM shows that external funding is not vital for carrying activities that invigorate the Misak culture.

I believe that projects, such as the PCM, can be interesting alternatives to record and to teach history of a given community. However, it is important to recognize that the most beneficiated with this work were us, the working group that developed this project. For us, the experience was incredible: we learned a lot about the history, the

problems, and the Misak territory through this communicative process. In addition, thanks, in great part, to the recognition achieved through this work, Rosa Montano and Liliana Camayo were called to work at the cabildo's office of census and hospital respectively.

Even though the results of the PCM were very satisfactory in terms of participation, information collected, empowerment, and divulgation, it is also important to state that this type of projects cannot fulfill all the communicative necessities that the community radio stations covers. As it is discussed in Chapter Three, the radio stations play a crucial role, especially at moments of crisis. However, projects, such as PCM, are interesting communicative alternatives to fulfill some of the initial objectives of the community radio projects, such as research and divulgate indigenous history, preserve their language, and discuss community problems, all this without the necessity of external funding and the restrictions imposed by the law.

I finish this Chapter discussing on detail two illustrations of the PCM in order to provide an example of this work.

Origen / Chu KuTriK Amtruiwan



Figure 6.6: Origen/ Chu Trik Amtruiwan

This drawing represents the myth of origin of the pueblo Guambiano (Misak). There are several lagoons on hills of the mountains of Guambia. The two most important of them are known as Nupisu, Nirrapu or Piendamu – currently known as Piendamu – (right) – and the Ñimbe (left). Together, they both formed a river – Rio Piendamu. The water from these lagoons formed lots of clouds which, in turn, saturated the lagoons producing floods. These weather cycles are controlled by the *Shure aguacero* (the rainy elder) – represented on a white horse in the right – and the *Shure paramo* (from the high mountains) – represented on the upper left.

After a heavy rain and thunderstorm, thousands of births showed in the sky and an avalanche cleaned the land. Those avalanches were both good and bad. They

destroyed and created. They dragged land, trees, animals, crops, and houses. But they also brought the first Wampia people (ancestors of the Misak), a boy and a girl who were born from water, after the lagoons became connected by a female and male rainbows. These first two Wampias were sons and daughters from the water and the earth, predestinated to be great farmers.

These kids came crying and wrapped in fabrics and *chumbes* with the colors of the *aroiris* (a circular rainbow). At the moment the children are coming down the river, the avalanche makes noise. Nowadays, this noise is represented by the Misak music: the flute as thunderstorms and the drums as the avalanche. This drawing also shows hieroglyphs found at various places through the Misak territory, especially at the area of Cofre. They represented, what the elders called “lenguaje natural” (natural language).

Unidad/ Lata Lata



Figure 6.7: Unidad/ Lata Lata

This graphic represents one of the most important moments in the Guambiano/Misak history. In the year 1979, the Guambia governor Taita Javier Morales, with the support of a group of external *solidarios*, recovered the property title of the Gran Chiman – territory at the right side of the Piendamú River – and started a process of political consciousness in different areas of the Misak territory. Next year, the governor Taita Segundo Tunubala continued this process and launched various actions to recover the Guambiano territory.

Right before the retaking of the land at the right side of the river, the authorities promulgated the *Manifiesto Guambiano*, a document that explained that the political, social, and economic plan of this community was based on the idea of “recuperar la tierra para recuperarlo todo” (recovering the land in order to recover everything). This is a very important proclamation for the indigenous people since it transformed the idea of space into territory. In this context, territory is the essential place for the development and preservation of all aspects of the Misak life. Thanks to the process of territorial recovery, the Guambianos have progressively recovered some aspects of their culture, such as their traditional hat and renaming themselves as Misaks (*the people* in Nam Trick). This process also involved the creation of the Misak anthem (right side) and the Misak flag – with the same colors of the Misak’s current dress. Finally, the open lock (at the door in the bridge) represents the union between free and terrajeros.

This drawing also shows some other characteristics of the Misak territory. For instance, it is divided by the Piendamú River, which is formed by the water that comes from the Piendamú and the Nimbe lagoons. The right side of the territory – the one recuperated from the *terratenientes* – is known as the male part of the territory. For instance, the lagoon located in this side of the territory does not have large animal life. On the other hand, the left part of the territory – which never was expropriated – is known as the female side. The lagoon at this side, in contrast to the other one, has abundant animal life.

Conclusions

This chapter intends to illustrate the philosophical roots of the communicative movement that seek contributing to the (re)construction of indigenous epistemes. There is an urgency to analyze and support alternative communicative proposals that go beyond dominant views on community media and its promotion of development and change. Mapas parlantes, the Pictogram of Communication Misak, and other communication proposals of this kind offer an alternative to media projects, such as the State supported indigenous radio stations, which requires expensive equipment, trained staff, and support from external entities. However, it is also clear that this type of projects cannot fulfill all the communicative tasks carried by the community radio stations. For instance, the PCM and another initiatives of this kind can contribute to the strength of indigenous languages, the dissemination of indigenous cultures, and the discussion of community's problems. However, community radio stations play a crucial

role at moments of crisis. If the indigenous people overcome the problems related to their radio stations – in terms of sustainability, production, and administration –, these two projects can potentially complement to each other.

Mapas parlantes and other communication projects of this type inspired the idea of “communication and good living”, which seeks the (re)construction, but also the preservation of values and ways of life rooted in the traditions of indigenous communities. This preservation, however, is not projected to maintain the views and traditions of these communities static. Rather, they are projected as tools to navigate in the modern world, preserving fundamental ethical values, such as the principle of parity for the Andean societies.

Even though communicative-epistemological plans, such as mapas parantes and the PCM, can potentially invigorate indigenous identities, the overall development of these projects has endured two main difficulties. On one hand, Eurocentric views – some of them from a humanistic perspective – have belittled the cultures from the Andes, claiming the natural superiority of the European thought. This agenda, which initiated since the European arrival in the 15th century, has attempted to destroy all trances from the Andean culture. Even though the immensity of the Andean cultural tradition is such that centuries of destruction have not been able to destroy it, there is still a need for continuing working to learn and recover its ethical and rational roots. Hopefully, the Andean culture might offer an alternative to destructive westerner model of life.

But, Eurocentrism has not been the only voice against an epistemic (re)construction of Andean cultures. Some sectors among the indigenous movement, especially from those who have used strategic essentialism as a political strategy, have also opposed to it. The reason is that an epistemological project requires a critical analysis of the positive, as well as the negative, experiences in which the Andean cultures have become involved. These negative aspect, such as internal conflicts, wars, struggles with other groups, violence, etc. interfere with an essentialist political agenda, which relies strongly on the myth of the noble savage – or an idealistic image of the indigenous population.

Despite all these difficulties, members of many different indigenous communities, such as the Misak, and academics, have continued developing tools for pursuing the indigenous epistemic agenda. Through the PCM, three students of the Misak University and myself wanted to contribute by researching, representing, and motivating discussions about all aspects of the Misak life. This experience is far from being unique. Through the Cauca region, it is easy to find similar experiences in which people employ a variety of tools to recover and maintain their cultures alive.

Conclusion

This dissertation provides a historical and theoretical analysis about the remarkable importance of community oriented radio stations in the process of indigenous inclusion since the 1960s in Colombia. ACPO Radio Sutatenza, for instance, played a fundamental educative role in the lives of several indigenous leaders who later participated in the political process that culminated in the Constitutional recognition of Colombia as a multicultural nation in 1991. This historical constitutional recognition, I argue, marks the end of the dominant system of exclusion that indigenous people endured since colonial times into a system of inclusion. Thanks to this system of inclusion, indigenous people gained new political, cultural, and economic privileges, such as assuring participation in spaces of political deliberation and decision making at local, regional, and national level; acquiring legal tools to protect some cultural features, such as their language and practices of local governance; and gaining the right of self-administration of some vital services, such as education and health, among another legal advantages.

One of the main motivations behind this dissertation was to provide a critical analysis on the idea of indigenous inclusion as well as the cases of ACPO Radio Sutatenza, evangelical radios, and public interest indigenous radio stations.

In relation to the idea of inclusion, since the arrival of the Europeans in the 15th century, the colonizing European powers have attempted to dominate native populations through two main approaches: exclusion and inclusion. On one hand, many European

intellectuals have rationalized the carnage against indigenous populations by proclaiming the inferiority of these populations. Due to the “inferiority” of indigenous people, Europeans felt entitled to enslave, Christianize, and dispossess them. All this was justified and rationalized as a campaign for the sake of the victims, the indigenous populations. This denial of the humanity of indigenous populations is what I refer as exclusion.

On the other hand, those who promoted the inclusion of indigenous population, another technique of domination employed by European colonizers, deemed these populations as “noble savages” who lived before the “original sin”. As a result, some European “humanists”, such as Bartolome de las Casas, decided to work towards the “protection” and the Christianization of the indigenous population. Even though many of these European humanists learned indigenous languages and engaged in bitter confrontations for the protection of indigenous bodies against exclusionist colonizers, they also were far from appreciating the epistemes of the populations from this side of the Atlantic. The humanists believed that indigenous people had the capacity to transform their “savage” traditions and to acquire the culture, mode of production, and religion of the Europeans. In summary, both groups – exclusionists as well as inclusionists – denied the alterity of pre-hispanic cultures.

Since then, the public policy of the Spaniard colonial power and the later Latin-American nations has oscillated between periods of exclusion and inclusion. The 1991 Colombian Constitution, for instance, culminated a long period of legal and political exclusion in which the State denied to indigenous people their condition as full citizens.

Despite the important set of rights granted by the 1991 Constitution to indigenous people, this recognition and the subsequent indigenous inclusion have caused paradoxical consequences. As shown, this consequences became visible in the analysis of the history of community oriented indigenous radio stations.

In order to present a full picture of the paradoxes of indigenous inclusion through the history of community oriented indigenous radio stations, it was necessary to start with the case of ACPO's Radio Sutatenza (ACPO). Since its foundation in the 1940s, this project provided educational opportunities in core areas, such as literacy and mathematics, as well as technical training in agriculture, housing improvement, nutrition, and sanitation among other topics to millions of people who lived in rural areas. Despite its initial conservative character – founded by a conservative priest, supported by the conservative government, and funded by agencies with an anti-communist agenda –, ACPO represented an extraordinary opportunity for the rural populations traditionally excluded by the Colombian educational system.

As shown in Chapter One, the literature on ACPO has been divided between scholars who are critical of this project due to its anti-communist approach (Ferreira and Straubhar, 1988), its vertical pedagogical approach (Beltran, 2010), and its limited participatory approach (Hurtado, 2012) and others who highlight the work of this program for empowering thousands of peasants who later became important leaders for their communities (Rojas, 2009, Gomez, 2012).

Based on the role played by ACPO in the Misak and the Nasa communities in Cauca, this dissertation presents a more nuanced scenario. On one hand, the evidence shows that ACPO represented an extraordinary opportunity for historically disenfranchised and excluded indigenous populations. For instance, many iconic and pioneer figures of the indigenous movement from Cauca, such as the Misak Javier Calambas and the Nasa Marcos Yule, as well as thousands of members of the indigenous grassroots, received basic and technical training through ACPO. This training happened at the moment when the members of these indigenous communities had very limited access to any sort of formal education.

ACPO also gave, for first time, the opportunity to study outside of their community to several women who later became important figures for the Misak community. This is the case of Mama Rosa Tombe, who participated in one of the six month training at ACPO institute in Sutatenza, Boyacá. According to her, in this life changing experience she learned about leadership and pedagogical techniques, and met people from all regions of Colombia. This experience motivated her to become a teacher at a local school. Her career has been as successful that she received a national award for her teaching methodologies of the Misak language, Nam Trick.

However, on the other hand, ACPO's work also had some aspects that affected indigenous population. First, indigenous knowledges and local realities were completely denied, creating a series of unseen problems in the following years. For instance, the ACPO technicians devaluated and deemed as synonymous with poverty the traditional Misak houses, made with wood, mud, and straw, while the construction of brick houses

were strongly supported. Shortly, those who built their houses with the materials suggested by ACPO's technicians realized that bricks houses were not the best option for Guambia, due to the humidity and coldness of its territory. A similar situation happened with agriculture. Before the 1980s, ACPO promoted the use of fertilizers and other green revolution techniques in order to increase production. Despite the initial production peak, many areas of the Misak territory became very sterile due to the excessive use of agrochemicals.

In addition to the housing and agriculture problem, ACPO also promoted other cultural changes that harmed indigenous cultures. For instance, ACPO's leaders believed that indigenous languages and religious syncretic traditions were impediments for the modernization of these populations. In fact, due to their cultural practices, indigenous people were deemed as inferior to the peasant-mestizo population.

Perhaps one of the most problematic of ACPO's theses was that illiteracy means ignorance and sin. By making this link, ACPO denied the enormous potential and knowledge of the people from these communities. I highlight the case of the elders because many of them are illiterate as well as very knowable about plants and traditional medicine. The ACPO devaluation of indigenous peoples is the replication of the colonial ideology that placed these population as "inferior". More research is necessary to understand the methods of memory storage and cognition developed by these indigenous population. That sort of research would contribute to ending the problematic view that see illiteracy as an automatic synonym of ignorance.

Before continuing with the next radio station project – the State supported indigenous community radio stations –, it was necessary to explain the transformation in the field of alternative media, specifically about radio, from development radio stations – such as Radio Sutatenza – into the 1990s community radio stations. Despite the large support of States and international donors, development radio stations could not demonstrate the success of their actions due, in great part, its vertical participatory model. At the same time, social movements and grassroots organizations, such as the Bolivian miner’s unions, started to develop their own radio stations, some of them with the support of progressive sectors of the Catholic Church influenced by Liberation Theology. These radio stations, known as “popular radio stations” sought to promote large structural transformations in an historical context when military juntas dominated the politics of various countries of the region.

During the 1980s when the pseudo-democratic civilian political systems replaced the military dictatorships, deindustrialization and neoliberalism eroded Marxist influenced traditional social movements, and identity social movements became robust, the idea of local and identity oriented community radio stations became stronger. As Pulleiro (2012) explains, this transformation meant a very deep transformation on the nature of alternative radio stations: from the focus of popular radio station in the political message promoted, the field passed to prioritize the emissary of the message. In other words, “who is saying it” became more important than “what is being said”.

Since the 1990s, after years of having a repressive legislation that hampered the development and operation of community radio stations, the Colombian government,

with the support of international agencies, decided to launch programs to establish community radio stations in different indigenous communities in Colombia. As discussed in Chapter Three, this public policy change was one of the consequences of the Constitutional recognition of “communication as a right”. In order to exercise this right, the Misak and the Nasa people were two of the pioneers in developing of self-produced community radio stations.

As explained, indigenous radio stations have enjoyed a great popularity among the State, academics, international developmental agencies, and – at least in appearance – indigenous organizations. Since the launching of the *Programa Comunidad* in Villa de Leyva in 2000, State and international developmental agencies functionaries have promoted indigenous radio stations as tools to resolve all sorts of problems that have affected indigenous communities, such as exclusion from the mass media, the weakening of their language and culture, the lack of spaces for deliberation and participation, etc. Academics have replicated this uncritical promotion, without presenting strong ethnographic evidence, and indigenous organizations have followed it in order to receive economic resources and other benefits – invitations to international events, good publicity, political recognition, etc. One of the goals of Chapter Three was to present a more critical view of this high idealized community radio projects.

As showed in Chapter Three, the reality of indigenous community radio stations diverge from the idealized opinions of the characters mentioned before. These radio stations have contributed to the Misak and Nasa communities in different respects, such as being instruments for mobilization in moments of crisis, forging new generations of

leaders, promoting the use of native languages, opening spaces for women's participation, supporting young musicians, and fostering relationships with other communities, among other contributions. However, these projects have also created new difficulties and new paradoxical situations for these communities. One of the most problematic situations that these radio stations endure is related to funding. Despite the initial promotion of radio as an affordable medium by State functionaries, the maintenance of these radios has resulted in a harsh economic burden for the indigenous communities. The problem is so dramatic that the accounts of the Nasa cabildo of Toribio were embargoed for debts related to its radio station.

Several other problems are derived from the economic difficulties of these radio stations. For instance, these radio stations have limited and unstable personnel. Often, the most experienced leave these projects for other jobs with better economic benefits. These problems, in addition to the difficulties with the maintenance of the equipment and the high cost of electricity, affect the quality of their media productions and transmission. In order to resolve these problems, many have opted to spend time and effort in finding economic support from the State and international agencies in form of grants, sponsorships, competitions, etc. In other words, indigenous communicators ended up putting their effort into the sustainability of those radio projects, rather than in serving their communities. In addition, this places radio stations in a situation of competition against each other, impeding the possibilities of building solidarities between them. Even more problematic, the reliance on external funding feeds the

problematic relationship of dependency between the powerful State and international agencies and subordinated indigenous communities.

One of the biggest paradoxes around these community radio projects is its indirect promotion of a culture of illegality. As many interviewers commented, despite the risk, it is simpler, cheaper, and more effective to operate these radio stations without the license granted by the State. Due to these licenses, these indigenous communities have to pay several taxes, high energy costs – the same as commercial entities –, and deal with costly paperwork. In addition, they are not allowed to make comments about news, promote indigenous politicians, or broadcast advertising – they can only mention sponsorships. This culture of illegality is very ironic considering that one of the reasons for supporting these radio stations was to establish a relationship between indigenous communities and the State based on trust, democratic political participation, and legitimation.

All these criticisms are not intended to become a manifesto against community radio stations. Rather, the idea is to contribute to the reevaluation and transformation of these inefficient and costly radio stations into cheaper, more autonomous, and more efficient forms of communication. This implies seeing at other forms of communications beyond radio stations, but also rethinking and conceiving other possible methodologies to develop autonomous and self-sustained radio stations.

The case of evangelical radio stations is also fundamental at the moment for analyzing indigenous inclusion and community radio stations. As discussed in Chapter

4, these projects have been either largely ignored or devaluated a priori by academic researchers. Those who criticize evangelical radio stations focus on their promotion of individual over communal empowerment (Dagron, 2007). Chapter 4 confirms the individual focus of these radio stations, however it also presents a more nuanced scenario. For instance, evangelical radio stations, in the context of Guambia, are a result of a long community work that started at the arrival of people from different evangelical organizations beginning in the 1930s, such as the Summer Linguistic Institute. Once the evangelicals arrived, they studied and systematized the Misak language and they established the first schools with female Misak teachers. These actions were a form of resistance against the dominant power of the Catholic Church, which represented the continuation of paternalistic, patriarchal, and anti Misak culture colonial actions.

Due to these actions of “resistance” against the domination of the Catholic Church, many Misaks became evangelicals in the following years. They, supported by evangelical development agencies, developed the first evangelical-community radio stations in the 1970s. The Misak evangelical radio stations, as well as evangelism itself, have dramatically changed since then. New generations of more radical evangelical pastors have appeared, temples with different evangelical denominations have mushroomed, and the Misak evangelical community has tremendously grown. In fact, the Misak authorities calculated that more than 60 percent of the people are evangelicals. However, evangelism, and evangelical radio itself are more than the instruments of indoctrination.

Evangelical churches and their radio stations offer essential services than no other State or indigenous institutions do. One of the most remarkable of these services is the attention and support network around acute problems that mostly affect women, such as alcoholism and domestic violence. Due to the absence of public policies from the State and lack of resources of indigenous local administrations, abused women do not have many other alternatives beyond turning their radios on evangelical radio stations or attending evangelical services. By doing so, they can listen to advice, meet other women who endure similar situations, and find hope. This is why the large majority of the evangelical Misak community is composed by women. In addition, evangelical churches and radio stations have attracted many young Misaks. These population find opportunities to develop their musical talents, to participate in sports, and to travel outside of their community.

One of the most interesting aspect of the Misak evangelical radio stations is that they function, in great part, due to the contributions of the members of the Misak community. Even though they have received support from external religious organizations, these projects no only survive, but also grow thanks to the volunteer work and the donations, or *siembras*, made by the people from the community. This situation contrasts with the previous case discussed, the community radio stations, which depend heavily on external funding.

Although the positive contributions of these evangelical churches and their radio stations to the Misak community are recognized, their problematic aspects of are also discussed. Among the most problematic is the fact that entities with the mission of

evangelizing the indigenous populations are the providers of essential services to the Misak community. Even though it is very hard to describe the type of evangelization promoted by these evangelicals due to the lack of uniformity among those projects, the majority of them promote a radical view of Christianity which denigrates indigenous cultural traditions. In other words, it is undeniable that these evangelical churches and their radio stations represent a complicated challenge for the reconstruction of indigenous systems of thought.

After discussing the case of evangelical radio stations, Chapter Five focuses on the analysis of the political development of the failed indigenous media law proposal. In order to consolidate the 1991 Constitutional mandate of “communication as a right”, the Colombian indigenous organizations and the State signed the 573 agreement for crafting a law proposal for indigenous communication. Even though this sounds like a very democratic move, this situation rapidly became highly problematic. This agreement increased the fragmentation between two indigenous sectors, one that leads towards self-administration of public resources, and another sector that prioritizes the consolidation of autonomic indigenous regimes. The main difference between these two groups is their different approaches towards politics: while the latter does not seem as problematic supporting politicians with neoliberal backgrounds in exchange for accessing the administration of public funding, the former considers those politicians as their natural enemies and those political supports as forms of betrayal to indigenous grassroots.

Unfortunately, the main national and regional indigenous organizations – ONIC, CRIC, and ACIN, for instance – have a strong tendency towards privileging the idea of self-administration over indigenous autonomy. This problematic approach became evident in the crafting of the communication law proposal. The rampant ambition of some leaders of these indigenous organizations was such that they ended up fighting against each other for controlling the budget of the 573 agreement. The discussion about indigenous communication became reduced to the control of some economic resources by some indigenous organizations, relegating the communicative needs, desires, and projects of indigenous grassroots.

As a response to the bureaucratic panorama of indigenous organizations, Chapter Six aims to contribute to the retaking, development, and consolidation of communication methods free from the constraints given by public policy, high operational costs, and the need for external funding. But, what is even more important, communication alternatives can contribute to the (re)construction of the systems of thought of the indigenous people from the Andes. This (re)construction is fundamental to the decolonization agenda of the Andean people, their culture, and the forms of production.

In order to achieve this goal, this chapter illustrates some important principles of the thought of the people from the Andes, such as the concept of parity. This discussion is based on the idea that the pre-hispanic cultures developed a philosophical logic different than the one known and imposed by the west. After the presenting the

discussion on the Andean philosophy, it is presented the *mapas parlantes*, a successful experience that contribute to the strength of the Nasa and Misak culture in the 1970s.

Inspired by the discussion on the Andean philosophy and based on *mapas parlantes*, this dissertation present a work carried by myself and three students from the Misak University that sought reconstructing, from a critical perspective, some of the most important historical movements of the Misak community. This work, called Pictograma de la Comunicacion Misak, does not necessarily seek to replace the community radio stations, but to illustrate that is possible to carry out participative communication methodologies that contribute to fulfilling the communicative needs and desires of the people around their memory, identity, challenges, and achievements.

Overall, this work is based on the belief that the modes of life of indigenous masses can become the ground for forging other concepts of living based on more sustainable, equal and communal, and less individualistic, self-centered, and rationalistic logic. After establishing a relationship of more than seven years with the Misak and the Nasa communities, I became convinced that that the common people from those communities discuss, enact, and practice some of those principles. The challenge is to contribute to overcome the bureaucratic and dependent spirit fostered by the State and some indigenous leaders, which has negatively affect the regional and national indigenous organizations, and to return and maintain alive the core of the indigenous movement of Colombia – its local grassroots.

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