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The Infrastructure of Influence: Transnational Collaboration and the Spread of US Cultural Influence in Colombia, 1930s-1960s

David Andrew Corcoran

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**THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF INFLUENCE:
TRANSNATIONAL COLLABORATION AND THE SPREAD
OF US CULTURAL INFLUENCE IN COLOMBIA,
1930s-1960s**

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy
History**

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Albuquerque, New Mexico

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DAVID A. CORCORAN

Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Master of Arts

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the growth of US cultural influence in Andean and Caribbean Colombia during World War II and the first half the Cold War (1930s-1960s). Exploring Colombian-US collaboration in educational and cultural arenas, the study articulates a mid-century shift in Colombian cultural orientation away from Europe and toward the US. Analyzing the cultural complexities of Colombian-US relations during those decades, it demonstrates why this shift began and how it was sustained.

While the study credits US cultural diplomacy with encouraging the shift, it emphasizes the role of Colombians in building the new cultural infrastructure that facilitated it. Intent on moving the nation toward capitalist modernity and minimizing the threat of social and political revolution, the Colombian national government and the Colombian Catholic Church aggressively enlisted US resources toward educational and cultural reforms. In doing so, they followed the lead of the nation's emerging middle classes, newly expanding professional groups, and modernist segments within the

national elite as they engaged US cultural models to clear their own paths toward modernity.

At the intersection of cultural and diplomatic history, this study presents intimate views of transnational cultures and communities as they developed around schools, cultural centers and mass media programs. Using the Colombian case, it demonstrates how new venues for collaboration were redefining Latin American-US cultural relations during the mid-twentieth century. In contrast to studies that frame inter-American encounters as manifestations of empire, this dissertation demonstrates the frequently overlooked yet crucial role of common interests in building cultural relations across national borders.

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Introduction

The Infrastructure of Influence

This dissertation analyzes the growth of US cultural influence in Andean and Caribbean Colombia during World War II and the first half the Cold War (1930s-1970). Exploring binational collaboration in educational and cultural arenas, the study articulates a mid-century shift in Colombian cultural orientation away from Europe and toward the US. Analyzing the cultural complexities of Colombian-US relations during those decades, it questions why this shift began and how it was sustained.

Colombian familiarity with US culture was limited before the 1940s. The US was recognized as the premier military and economic power in the hemisphere, but its cultural achievements went largely unrecognized. Colombian elites, who historically looked to Europe for cultural inspiration, dismissed US culture as commercialized, inferior, and inauthentic. For those in the general Colombian public, US mass media entertainment, commercial advertising and consumer goods served as their primary cultural reference points. Such media proffered only narrow representations of US culture. Yet, once a formal program of US cultural diplomacy was initiated during World War II, the situation changed dramatically. This dissertation demonstrates Washington's mid-century success in establishing US cultural credentials in Colombia beginning in the 1930s.

The study emphasizes the role of Colombians in facilitating the spread of US cultural influence in the middle decades of the twentieth century. US cultural diplomacy appeared in the nation during a period of accelerated cultural change and Colombians proved enthusiastic about engaging with it. Intent on moving the nation toward capitalist modernity and minimizing the threat of social or political revolution, the Colombian

national government and the Colombian Catholic Church aggressively enlisted US education and cultural resources toward their ends. Simultaneously outside of government and religious hierarchies, Colombians across class were also accessing US resources to construct their own paths toward modernity. In the field of education, they molded US resources to develop cultural and educational infrastructure that their national government and national church had failed to provide for them. Particularly for the emerging middle and professional classes, US educational and cultural resources became more broadly accessible.

The chapters that follow historicize the founding and evolution of three US-sponsored cultural projects in urban centers located on the Colombian Caribbean and in the Colombian Andes: "American" schools, binational cultural centers, and US mass media programs. The narrative details the formulation of these projects, examines their implementation, and tracks modifications as they evolved locally over the course of three decades. I argue that these developing projects were central to the spread of US educational and cultural influence in Colombia at mid-century; these schools, cultural centers, and mass media programs were the infrastructure of influence. Supported by such infrastructure, new *transnational educational and cultural communities* emerged. Significantly, participants in these communities broke with longstanding Colombian tradition of looking to Europe for cultural inspiration, resources, and models. Examining transnational educational and cultural communities and the infrastructure that sustained them, this study articulates the complexities of Colombian-US cultural relations at mid-century. Such analysis yields a more complex portrait of foreign/local encounters than is

provided by more traditional political and economic approaches to US foreign policy and inter-American relations.

Engaging both political narrative and cultural history, I argue that Colombian-US relations (and by extension Latin American-US relations) have been too narrowly defined both in scholarship and in popular perception as a function of official foreign policies that emanate from national capitals. As a result, cultural interaction between Colombian and US nationals outside of political and business circles is rarely considered as either contributing to or defining of the binational relationships. Such an approach makes an artificial distinction between the realm of political economy and culture. To overcome this separation, I examine educational and cultural programs that are jointly maintained by citizens of both countries to serve both elite and non-elite communities. I emphasize the construction of community and culture as local processes while remaining interested in the ways regional, national and transnational dynamics also construct these cultures. Local processes, then, are set against a broader political chronology: mid-century education reforms in both Colombia and the US, inter-American cultural diplomacy during World War II, Colombia's bloody civil conflict known as the *la Violencia*, and the first half of the Cold War.

Diplomacy Meets Culture

The schools, cultural centers and media projects that are the focus of this study first began to emerge in Colombia (and throughout Latin America as a whole) in the late 1930s. At that time, foreign policymakers in Washington had grown increasingly concerned over European influence in Latin America, and, in reaction, established a cultural relations program within the US Department of State. By the time this program

was created, European-sponsored schools, cultural centers, and libraries had been institutional fixtures of Latin America's urban landscapes for decades. Yet prior to this point, Washington had never perceived these institutions as a competitive threat. Since World War I, US business interests had a considerable presence in the region's economy, but in contrast to major European powers, the US government had taken little interest in directly sponsoring cultural programs or institutions abroad.

US government disinterest in cultural diplomacy was rooted in pre-New Deal beliefs about the role of government. Since the late nineteenth century, the US approach to economic development and governing as a whole had favored private initiative, investment, and control over government direction, regulation and funding. Philosophically rooted in classical liberalism, with its deep distrust for the coercive and corrupting power of the state, this ascendant economic philosophy placed faith in both individuals and private concerns and allowed only a limited role for government in national economic affairs. Challenges to this philosophy were frequent in the first third of the twentieth century, and especially significant was the political activism of the so-called "progressives." They demanded stronger regulation of business and the national economy to alleviate the social tensions that appeared with modern capitalism. Progressives achieved some success with social legislation, but firm limitations on state management of the economy remained. Not until the 1930s, when FDR's New Deal linked social and economic concerns, did new space begin to open to more activist governance.¹

¹ Cheryl Greenburg, "Twentieth Century Liberalism: Transformations of an Ideology" in *Perspectives on Modern America: Making Sense of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Harvard Sitkoff (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 55-79. See also Steve Fraiser and Gary Gerstle, eds., *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

Economic elite concern for keeping the US government out of economic and business affairs did not extend across the national border. To the contrary, in the interest of strengthening their enterprises representatives of business and industry strongly encouraged diplomatic and military activism on foreign soil. In the early twentieth century, Latin America was the most frequent target of this activism. Diplomats characteristically employed heavy-handed pressure tactics on behalf of US business interests. Diplomatic advocacy in support of oil companies, banana exporters, and other business concerns is well documented.² Washington used both military and diplomatic resources to aggressively defend the operations and assets of US business interests in the region. As a result, the history of US-Latin American relations between the late 1800s and the early 1930s is marked by repeated violations of Latin American national sovereignties. This was especially the case in Central America and the Caribbean basin, which endured repeated US military interventions and occupations during the period.

Though an aggressive economic foreign policy was deemed necessary by the US business community and successive US presidents, regarding cultural diplomacy the tradition of deferring to private initiative and limiting government activity prevailed. Many policymakers in Washington believed the diffusion of US culture abroad would occur automatically with the expansion of American business, and to some extent this proved a valid expectation. US film and music were popular in the region before the formal cultural relations program began. Additionally, a number of US philanthropic foundations and professional organizations had active cultural exchange programs with

² For the Colombian case see Marcel Bucheli, *Bananas and Business: The United Fruit Company in Colombia, 1899-2000* (New York: New York University Press, 2005); Jorge Arango Villegas, *Petróleo, oligarquía e imperio* (Bogota: El Ancora Editores, 1982); Richard Lael, *Arrogant Diplomacy: US Policy Toward Colombia, 1903-1922* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1987); Stephen J. Randall, *Colombia and the United States: Hegemony and Interdependence* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992).

Latin American universities and intellectual groups. While the Latin American programs of the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Institute of International Education, and the American Council on Education received no funding from the US government, their efforts had Washington's encouragement.³ But private cultural efforts in Latin American capitals could not match the influential reach of well organized and well funded European cultural diplomacy. Thus, even with emerging US dominance of aggregate foreign business in Latin America, the lack of an official US cultural diplomacy left individual European nations --Germany, Spain, Italy, England and especially France-- with significantly stronger cultural presence and influence in the region. Only in the 1930s under the threat of world war did the US government begin to recognize its weak cultural influence in the region as a commercial and political disadvantage.

European cultural diplomacy in Latin America included sponsorship of private bilingual elementary and secondary schools, language teaching institutes, and social clubs. European countries funded academic exchanges, presentations of national culture, musical and theatrical performances. Art exhibitions were also common. Notably, most European cultural presentations focused on high culture and were marketed toward the local elite in the national capitals and major ports of entry. This ensured European programming a high profile in the national press. In contrast, US culture remained a

³ J. Manuel Espinosa, *The Inter-American Beginnings of US Cultural Diplomacy, 1938-1948* (Washington: US Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, 1976). Espinosa worked for the Department of State and wrote the history of the first decade of the cultural relations program as director of the History Project of the Department's Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs (CU). Celebratory insider's analysis needs to be approached cautiously, but Espinosa's detailed account is an indispensable starting point for understanding the evolution of US cultural diplomacy and its Latin American roots. On the role of private philanthropic organizations in promoting educational and cultural exchanges with Latin America – see especially “Chapter II: Private Inter-American Cultural Exchange Activity.”

largely unknown commodity. Popular perceptions based on stories or features in newspapers, magazines and film, usually centered upon economic achievements, technological advances, and the “American” quality of life. As compared with the celebrated appreciation for European high culture among educated Colombians, the US was found lacking. As Colombian intellectual Baldomero Sanín Cano explained in the early 1940s:

The general opinion of Colombians of average culture about the saxoamerican culture can be summed up in a few phrases: ‘they are great inventors; it’s a lifestyle of amazing activity; the Singer buildings and the Brooklyn Bridge are stupendous architectural works; but in general they are very ignorant.’⁴

The shift from classic liberalism’s suspicion of government intrusion to New Deal liberalism’s beliefs in the responsibility of the state created an opportunity for official US engagement in cultural diplomacy. However, it was not until fascist regimes in Europe threatened world war that Washington reversed its aversion to cultural diplomacy and implemented a program in Latin America. Fears that the US was losing influence in its own backyard to anti-democratic ideologies spurred the development of a variety of cultural initiatives in the years leading up to the Second World War. Following the lead of both its European allies and soon-to-be enemies, the US placed education at the center of its new cultural program for the region. With the onset of war, programming

⁴ “La opinión general entre las personas de cultura media colombianas acerca de la civilización saxoamericana podía concentrarse en unas pocas frases: ‘son grandes inventores; la vida es de una actividad asombrosa; los edificios de la Singer y el puente de Brooklyn son obras estupendas de arquitectura. Pero en lo general son muy ignorantes.’” Baldomero Sanín Cano, *Un Pueblo en Defensa de un Mundo: con unos Documentos Historicos de los Estados Unidos* (Bogotá: Centro Colombo-Americano, 1943), p. 9. Sanín’s assessment of how the US was perceived (before engaging in cultural diplomacy) was valid. In the first half of the twentieth century, popular perception credited US industriousness and progress but considered the *yanqui* devoid of culture. This perception was repeated over and over in the Colombian press and especially by critics of US influence. When they first appeared in the 1940s, the Colombian-US cultural centers took on the task of confronting this perception and broadly promoted a more balanced understanding of US cultural achievements. The publication of Sanín’s speech by the Centro Cultural Colombo-Americano was part of the campaign to correct this perception. This issue will be explored in greater detail in the body of the dissertation.

accelerated. By the early 1940s, American-sponsored schools, cultural centers and libraries were opening in the capitals and major cities of the region. At the same time, Washington-funded educational film, radio and print-media campaigns reached a wide Latin American audience. By the time the war concluded and communism was emerging as the new threat to democracy, many of the temporary cultural programs that had been enacted in the “other American republics”⁵ to counter Axis influence became permanent within the US foreign policy bureaucracy. Significantly, during the Cold War many of the cultural programs that had been developed for Latin America became the models for US cultural diplomacy around the globe.⁶

Transnational Educational and Cultural Communities

Colombia’s American Schools

American-sponsored schools (“American schools” henceforth) in Colombia and world-wide are private, college-preparatory, pre-K/12 (pre-kindergarten through grade 12) community-owned schools. They offer US-accredited programs in English and award official US high school diplomas to their graduates. Located in national capitals and important regional cities, these American schools provide US-style education for children of the host country, children of US citizens living abroad, and children of third country nationals. Where local law demands, students in these schools must also meet national curriculum standards and doing so entails delivering a portion of the total academic program in the local language; such is the case in Colombia where certain subjects are

⁵ The phrase “other American republics” was the collective term for the nations of Latin America used by advocates of Pan-American cooperation in the first half of the last century. The term had been used by US and Latin American diplomats as early as the independence period, but its usage became more prevalent during the era of World War II.

⁶ While the US Department of State’s program of cultural relations originated with pre-war efforts in Latin America, the limited scholarship on cultural diplomacy is largely focused on US-European relations during the Cold War.

taught in either English or Spanish to satisfy the requirements for the national *bachillerato* certificate and the US high school diploma. While American schools are not official institutions of the US government, many have received financial and professional resource assistance from the US Department of State, which maintains an Office of Overseas Schools. From initial grants to a few schools in Latin America in the early 1940s, the US program has grown to now assist approximately 200 schools and 110,000 students worldwide annually.⁷ Levels of assistance to institutions have fluctuated since the first grants were offered during World War II, but historically schools receive periodic support for acquiring property and plant, for supplementing salaries of foreign staff, and for improving academic programs. Though the criteria for receiving US government assistance has changed slightly over the decades, recipients of grants have always been schools with a student body of mixed nationality (rather than a student population dominated by US nationals), US-accredited programs delivered in English, and a board of directors that includes significant host-country representation. Schools founded and operated by US religious organizations or corporations are not eligible for assistance.

American schools in Colombia serve an upper-class segment of the population. In name and in practice, these schools are strongly associated with US culture. Yet, as this dissertation will make clear, they function within elite Colombian realities and have evolved primarily to meet locally-determined needs. US nationals have usually occupied the directorships and up to 50% of staff positions at these schools, but these individuals most often accept such employment only for short-terms. In comparison, as US nationals

⁷ US Department of State, Office of Overseas Schools, "World Wide Fact Sheet – 2006-2007: American Sponsored Elementary and Secondary Schools Overseas," <http://www.state.gov/m/a/os/1253.html> [accessed October 1, 2007].

come and go from the schools, Colombians, who are the majority among *juntas directivas* [boards of directors], faculty and staffs, exercise long-term, consistent leadership and influence over the institutions. Also significant is the fact that over the course of the twentieth century, the student bodies of Colombia's nine American schools have been increasingly Colombianized; indeed, by the end of the twentieth century, Colombian students accounted for 95% of enrollees at all but one of the schools.⁸ As a result upwards of 8,000 Colombian students pay for and receive a formal US-style and US government sanctioned education annually. Most do not have to leave their own neighborhoods to do so.

Bilingual at a very young age and possessing both Colombian and US education credentials upon graduation, most American school graduates are well prepared to negotiate opportunities across political and cultural borders. The importance of the accreditation awarded to American schools in Colombia and Latin America by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), a US regional educational association, cannot be overstated: as a formal mechanism, the accreditation process facilitates smooth access for Latin Americans to the US university system. Often, in the range of 50% of graduating classes (varying by year and location) opt to attend universities in the US. Many others students do so later for graduate or professional training. Because the dual US and Colombian programs of the American schools are rigorous by US and Colombian standards, the schools are widely regarded as among the

⁸ The absence of US students is much more pronounced in Colombia than it is in typical American schools elsewhere. The violence and instability that has characterized Colombia since guerilla activity began in the 1960s and the drug cartel violence appeared in the late 1970s limited the number of US families living in the nation.

best in the country. Graduates, who choose to study in Colombia, are accepted into and attend the best national universities.⁹

American schools in Colombia and around the globe foster the development of transnational educational and cultural communities. I define these communities as groups of individuals whose connections to each other result from shared participation in educational or other cultural projects that function across international borders. Such communities take both traditional and non-traditional form, and they may manifest by physical communion of participants in schools, classrooms, and cultural spaces or by less direct relationships such as those that develop from engagement in programs from afar. People voluntarily (or involuntarily in the case of young children) affiliate with these communities through a range of activities that might include enrolling in an American school, participating in a foreign language learning program in a cultural center, or taking part in an academic or art exchange program. Affiliation with transnational educational and cultural communities may run long-term as in the case of a family that is connected to the American school in Bogotá for generations or be as temporary as participation in a radio English class. These communities are characterized by an active core of participants whose activities often intersect with other cultural (and especially educational) communities at home and abroad: schools share resources and compete on sports fields; students move between schools as their educations progress; educators share curriculum with colleagues; school staffs meet in professional development programs at universities

⁹ US Department of State, “World Wide Fact Sheet – 2006-2007: American Sponsored Elementary and Secondary Schools Overseas.” For an overview of American schools in Colombia at the turn of the last century see Michael Adams, “Leadership and School Climate: A Mixed Methods Study of United States-Accredited Colombian Schools” (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2006).

and colleges; and administrators establish extra-institutional links that pool educational resources.¹⁰

Importantly, participation in transnational educational and cultural communities allows individuals to gain first-hand knowledge of a foreign culture and to experience varying degrees of identification with it. In these communities cross-cultural dialogues, relationships and dependencies develop through which individuals alter and expand their educational and cultural options. Most significantly, these relationships loosen the influence of nation-states and geographic boundaries over individual's paths and identities. In this dissertation, I argue that transnational educational and cultural communities create groups of people who challenge the rigid foreign/local dichotomies that framed analyses of US-Latin American relations under the dominant historical paradigms of the twentieth century. Examining the cultures that evolve around these communities underscores that individuals mold and refashion identities using the resources available to them from local, regional, national, and transnational sources.

Traditional political and economic analyses of Latin American-US relations have too casually accepted official versions of national identity that are formulated and promoted by government and cultural elite. Overlooking complex questions of who and what constitute Latin American and US cultures, they provide narrow assessments of Latin American-US encounters. Analyzing transnational educational and cultural communities as they develop locally, this study argues that regional, local and transnational identities, and not just homogenized versions of national identity, are

¹⁰ Transnational educational communities are by definition also transnational cultural communities. In this study I use the term "transnational educational and cultural communities" rather than the more general "transnational cultural communities" to emphasize the role of cross-border educational processes in constructing Colombian-US encounters.

crucial to understanding encounters between foreigners and locals. Regional and local cultures were not subsumed by the official and uniform projections of *colombianidad* [Colombian-ness] or *estadounidensidad* [US American-ness] that officially circulated around diplomatic projects. Because national identities are grounded in local and regional realities, multiple and competing versions of *colombianidad* and *estadounidensidad* always converged where these foreign cultures met. Viewing Latin American-US encounters through various educational and cultural communities evidences how local, regional, national and transnational cultures are constantly intersecting and evolving.

Binational Centers: The Colombo-American Cultural Centers

Like American schools, US-sponsored cultural centers in Latin America also foster transnational communities. Known as binational centers (BNCs), these cultural centers are similar to American schools in that they are autonomous, privately founded institutions. They are run by boards of directors comprised of host-country and US nationals, who are residents of the local communities. In contrast to the schools, however, BNCs serve a largely middle-class population. They are less exclusive institutions and are more accessible to non-elite populations.

The first BNCs were founded without US financing in Argentina and Brazil between the world wars. These early centers, and the many more that were founded in the region during and after World War II, were most commonly organized by Latin American nationals who had studied in US schools and universities, had business connections to US corporations, or had special interest in some aspect of US culture. US nationals residing in the region often supported local cultural efforts and proved fundamental to founding BNCs. When US cultural diplomacy was established in the late

1930s as war loomed in Europe, cultural policymakers recognized the utility of these centers for encouraging inter-American solidarity and hemispheric peace. Thus, they began to openly encourage and financially support the establishment of new centers throughout the region. At the close of the twentieth century, there were over 170 US-affiliated BNCs worldwide, and the largest regional concentration was found in Latin America.¹¹

In Bogotá in 1942, the first BNC in Colombia appeared as the *Centro Cultural Colombo-Americano* [the Colombian-American Cultural Center]. Its mission was to promote “mutual understanding” between the peoples of Colombia and the United States through language courses and cultural programs. Over the course of the twentieth century, eight additional and independently operated Colombo-Americano cultural centers were founded in cities throughout the country. Similar to the American schools, each of the centers was run by a US director, who was hired by the individual boards of directors at the institutions. Notably, Colombians usually formed the majority of the board members and usually held the presidency. As was the case with American schools, directors, volunteer board members, and paid teachers from the US typically worked for the centers for a couple of years while the Colombian staff and board members had significantly longer terms of service. Thus did Colombians, more than US nationals, offer consistent and long-term leadership to these institutions. Grants from Washington were awarded annually to many of the centers into the 1970s to assist with construction and equipment costs, payment of employee salaries, purchase of teaching materials in the US,

¹¹ Louis P. Falino, Jr., “The Binational Center and US Foreign Policy,” *Papers 19*, The North-South Agenda, University of Miami (May 1996). See also US Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, “English Language Programs Abroad: I. Binational Centers,” <http://www.state.gov/education/engteaching/eal-elp.html> [accessed October 1, 2008].

and organization and presentation of special cultural programs. By the early 1980s, however, US government grants to BNC's worldwide ended. Some centers closed, but many have continued to function and flourish owing to their local grounding.¹²

The US established a formal cultural presence with the opening of the first Colombo-Americano in Bogotá in hopes of balancing the cultural influence of European nations. Immediately, the new institution became an arena for showcasing US cultural achievement in the arts. Through lectures, music concerts, and art shows, the Colombo-Americano proved an effective forum for confronting the Latin American stereotype of the US as commercially and technologically advanced but void of culture. At the same time the first cultural center, and each of the sister institutions that followed, embraced a commitment to exploring and promoting Colombian culture. As this study will make clear, cultural programs of the Colombo-Americanos were just as likely to be Colombia as US-focused.

This dissertation argues that the various *Centros Culturales Colombo-Americanos* provided new and flexible educational options for the middle class at a time when Colombia's national educational system was expanding and diversifying but unable to keep pace with new demand. The cultural and educational programs of the Colombo-Americanos facilitated the adjustment of Colombia's rising middle and professional classes to urban modernity. English classes were fundamental to this process but so were business courses, bilingual secretarial programs, library services, and performing art projects organized by the centers' boards and staffs. During this period the Catholic Church and the Colombian upper class were losing their monopoly over national

¹² Elimination of funding for BNCs reflected the ascendancy of fiscal conservatism, which re-popularized the philosophies of limited governance that had guided Washington before the rise of New Deal liberalism.

education, and with this change so too was lost their traditional power to direct and define Colombian national culture. As the middle and lower classes gained greater educational access and mass media became more accessible to them, alternatives to elite Euro-centric educational and cultural forms reshaped the nation's social landscape.¹³ The Colombo-Americanos' programs were important alternatives in a nation with scarce educational options.

BNC's are fascinating institutions because they reveal how the construction of Colombian identities was impacted by new, non-elite educational and cultural systems that responded to the needs of surging urban populations. Transnational cultures emerged around these centers resulting in a mid-twentieth century explosion in cross-border connections between middle-class and elite Colombians and individuals, institutions and cultural communities in the US. The diversity of these connections renders traditional views of Colombian-US relations that are built from analysis of political economies narrow and incomplete. Examining the cultures of the Centros Colombo-Americanos, shared political and economic philosophies of the US and Colombian governments --especially staunch anticommunism and faith in capitalism-- are much in evidence. However, equally evident is the centrality of common educational

¹³ Victoria Peralta calls the period 1930-1946, the "final phase" of the cultural hegemony of the Colombian elite. With the arrival of mass media communication in the 1920s (radio, photography, and motion pictures) "the predominance of written culture, which had been so important for representing the elite and maintaining power, began to crumble." European cultural forms embraced by the elite met with new competition from both regional (within the nation) and foreign cultures in battles to define Colombian culture. See Victoria Peralta, "Distinctions and Exclusions: Looking for Cultural Change in Bogotá during the Liberal Republics, 1930-1946" (PhD diss., New School of Social Research, 2005). The growth in US cultural influence during the decline of elite and Church hegemony is an important focus of this dissertation. Safford and Palacios contend that because non-elite Colombians perceived aspects of US culture as egalitarian, some Colombians engaged with US popular culture as "a healthy counterweight to the high culture of the traditional dominant classes." Frank Safford and Marco Palacios, *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 343.

and cultural interests (among the peoples of both nations) in structuring broader Colombian-US relations.

Mass Media Programs: Film, Radio, and Print

Compared to the Colombo-Americanos and American schools, the third US-sponsored cultural initiative analyzed in this study was not an institution-based program. Mass media programming was designed to reach the widest possible cross-section of Latin American populations. These programs were not class exclusive, and they often targeted the upper and middle classes. Still, they were specifically seen as the most practical method of direct US contact with the impoverished masses, who lived mainly in remote rural areas but were an increasing presence in marginal urban barrios. From the earliest days of official cultural diplomacy, Washington organized educational radio, film and print media programming to educate Latin Americans about their “good neighbor” to the north. Simultaneously, mass media provided a platform for promoting visions of inter-American unity and alternatives to European models of modernity. Thus, while the early intent of this programming was educational and cultural, it was always embedded in hemispheric politics and never far removed from the realm of propaganda. As war then cold war influenced US cultural policies, the line between educational and propaganda programming blurred. Mass media resources became more explicitly linked to global rather than hemispheric politics. Educational and cultural themes did remain central to programming, but informational and propaganda objectives had a clear impact on resource production.

While schools and cultural centers in Colombia were run by local boards, mass media programs were more directly operated by the US foreign policy bureaucracy.

Diplomats were deeply involved in contracting with private Colombian radio stations to broadcast US programs that had been developed with Latin America content. Through their efforts, English lessons, popular and classical music, social and political commentary, and news programs connected radio listeners to world communities beyond their own. Establishing and maintaining local networks for US government funded educational and propaganda film, diplomats directed the distribution of visual material whose explicit or implicit themes were the benefits of democracy and capitalism over the horrors of fascism, communism and socialism. Films emphasizing health and hygiene, promoting the importance of education and literacy, detailing the development of professions and career paths, presenting models for labor organization, and particularly celebrating opportunities and choices enjoyed by the US middle class all brought an official US message to enormous Latin American audiences.

Scholarship on US-Latin American relations during the second half of the last century shows a pronounced tendency toward defining mass media as a tool of US imperialism or (neo-imperialism). Commercial mass media was often the focus, but in the process, official US cultural programs which employed mass media were reduced to imperialist propaganda. While assessing US mass media programs as a means of cultural domination is an important consideration, historicizing the uses of mass media resources in local contexts is a necessary, if largely overlooked, first step. In tracking the evolution of educational radio and film programs, it becomes clear that mass media programs met overlapping US and Colombian socio-political objectives --not the least of which were the related goals of maintaining fervent anti-Communism and extending the reach of education to areas where it was lacking. This study details a high level of Colombian

government collaboration with and repackaging of US radio and film content to meet national needs. Many outside of the national governments also took advantage of US mass media resources to supplement their own efforts in educational and cultural outreach; regional educational bureaucracies, international organizations, schools, educators, artists, intellectuals, student organizations, businesses, the Catholic Church, as well as the new media, information and entertainments industries all took advantage of the availability of US radio and film resources and materials to meet their own needs. In the process, locals filtered the original intent of the mass media messages produced and package in the US.

Differentiating between various forms of *transnational educational and cultural communities*, this study considers how mass media education programs functioned both in contrast to and in concert with the institution-based schools and cultural centers. Analyzing the cultures that developed inside these various communities, yields visions of Colombian-US encounters that are more complex than a simple foreign/local oppositional frame allows. Most importantly, historicizing these communities demonstrates the transnational dynamics that sustained rapid growth of US cultural influence in mid-century Colombia. This study recognizes American schools, binational centers, mass media programming as well as the transnational communities they spawned as crucial infrastructure of US cultural influence.

The Colombian Context: Geography, History, and National Identity

Before and after the foreign/local encounters that were initiated with the arrival of Cristóbal Colón (Christopher Columbus, for whom the nation is named), Colombian geography conditioned the growth of its isolated regional cultures. The fourth largest of

the modern South American nations, Colombia is roughly divided into two halves, the lowland east and the mountainous west. The nation is flanked by the Caribbean Sea to the north and the Pacific Ocean to the west; separating these waters, the thin isthmus that connects North and South America creates a short international border with Panama. To the south, Colombia shares borders with neighboring Ecuador and Peru, while Brazil and Venezuela are its neighbors to the east.

The eastern half of the nation is both enormous and sparsely populated. In its northern sector, *Los Llanos*, lowland plains of grass are crossed by rivers that drain to the Orinoco River and a border shared with Venezuela. In the larger southern sector, grasslands give way to dense jungle whose rivers feed the continent's principal river, the Amazon. Difficult to access, this southern area is home to indigenous populations who have historically lived with limited contact with the Colombian central-state. On the nation's western border, along the Pacific Ocean, is another sparsely populated region of rainforests, coastal plains, and jungle. On that coast, the city of Buenaventura grew with a boom in coffee exports in the early twentieth century; it soon became the nation's principal port.

Between the lowland east and the coastal west, Colombia is dominated by three distinct ranges of the Andes. Most of the national population lives in this mountainous interior. The region has always been difficult to traverse. Two northerly flowing rivers between the Andean ranges have historically provided connection between the Caribbean coast and the lowest elevations of the interior. Towns along the Magdalena and Cauca rivers served as transportation and commercial ports for Andean cities located in the high valleys of the mountains above. Reaching the interior ports by river from the Caribbean

coast historically involved a lengthy and uncomfortable trip against the currents. To reach the principal cities higher up in the Andes required additional time, energy, and climbing muscles.

As the principal population centers of the interior were always located at high elevation, communication with and between Andean regions was extremely difficult before the arrival of automobiles, radio, and air travel. Once these technologies were available, they played an important role in accelerating national integration. Still, even with modern transportation and communication, land travel between Colombian regions remains arduous and time consuming. Distance between Bogotá and Medellín, for example, is not great as the condor flies, but their elevations and locations in different Andean chains makes for substantial separation between them; a journey from one to the other involves a winding descent from the *Savana de Bogotá* [the Bogotá Plain] at 8,500 feet to the Magdalena River 7,500 feet below --only to then face steep new mountain passes on the other side of the river in the climb to Medellín at 5,000 feet. In Colombia, even travel within one of the three Andean chains involves series of climbs and descents that make distances between cities and towns much greater than they appear on paper.

For Spanish settlers who arrived after the conquest, Colombia's Andean interior offered tremendous agricultural opportunity, but its isolation kept it from developing into an important imperial center. Home to indigenous agricultural societies when the Spaniards arrived, the high mountain valleys and plains of the Andes offered volcanic soil, substantial rainfall, equatorial sunshine, and abundant Indian labor for European settlers to exploit. And they did. Land privatizations and abolition of communal governments led to a loss of indigenous communities and identities. Miscegenation

produced a *mestizo* or mixed race Indian-Spanish majority in the Colombian interior. Because the region eventually became home to vast the majority of the national population, the notion that Colombia is a *mestizo* nation of mixed Indian-Spanish heritage prevails.

The Caribbean coast is a region of tremendous geographic and cultural diversity that is far removed from Andean worlds. Geographically, the coast includes a sizeable desert peninsula, the highest coastal mountain in the world, an enormous fresh water estuary, lush coastal plains, grasslands and tropical rainforests. Various Caribbean islands and remote archipelagos are part of the region as well. On this coast, local cultures developed far removed from the mountainous center of the nation. As a result, many of the peoples of the region have shared more in common with the cultures of the Greater Caribbean than with those of Andean Colombia. Through the first third of the twentieth century, the non-elite majority in and around the important Caribbean ports of Santa Marta, Cartagena and Barranquilla had little connection to the central-state of the interior. Before the arrival of the Spanish, many distinct indigenous groups had occupied the land, but post-conquest, these groups diminished. That coastal Indians mixed not only with Europeans but Africans brought to the region as slaves differentiates the coast's race/ethnic mixture from that of the Indian-Spanish interior.

In the colonial era, the walled city of *Cartagena de Indias* [Cartagena of the Indies] had been a silver and gold storage depot, a transfer point for precious metals and merchandise that moved between the European metropolis and its enormous American empire. The city became the continent's chief port of entry for imported goods, and this included African slaves who were sold on Cartagena's plazas and dispersed southward

throughout the continent. Within Colombia, many of the slaves were transferred to the Pacific coast to provide labor for gold mining and sugar plantations. Others were kept closer to Cartagena to work on ranches, farms, and in domestic service. Home by the mid-twentieth century to one-sixth of the national population, Colombia's Caribbean coast is distinguished by the black and mixed (African, Indigenous, and Spanish) race/ethnic composition of its population. Like the Pacific coastal region and in contrast to much of the Colombian interior, *la costa* [the Caribbean region] and *Costeños* [the people of that region] have long been identified with blackness.

Colombian History and the Quest for National Unity

During the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century, the Colombian central-state was defined less by its strength and achievements than by its weakness and failures. Between brutal civil wars, governance handicapped by extreme partisanship, and regular and forceful extra-governmental challenges to its authority, the central-state has suffered what Marco Palacios calls "elusive legitimacy."¹⁴ With stable but ineffective democratic institutions, the central government has historically operated in an elite bubble distanced from the reality of the impoverished majority. Cultural divides, between classes and regions, exacerbated such distance. Regionalism and violent rebellion presented further challenges toward the consolidation of state power.¹⁵ Not surprisingly, exploration of Colombia's claim to nationhood has been an important theme in historical scholarship.¹⁶

¹⁴ Marco Palacios, *Between Legitimacy and Violence: A History of Colombia, 1875-2002*, trans. Richard Stoller (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006). See Chapter 5, "An Elusive Legitimacy," pp. 170-213.

¹⁵ That regionalism impeded the consolidation of the nation-state is broadly asserted in scholarship. Yet, as Posada-Carbó demonstrates, regionalism was also a reaction to exclusion from --rather than inclusion in-- the economic, political and cultural projects of the central-state. Eduardo Posada-Carbó, *The Colombian Caribbean: A Regional History, 1870-1950* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 249-251.

¹⁶ On the notion that nationhood is a claim and a practice of politics, see Derek Sayer, "Everyday Forms of State Formation: Some Dissident Remarks on Hegemony" in *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and Negotiation in Modern Mexico*, eds. Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent (Durham, NC:

Early post-independence Colombian political history fits a familiar Latin American pattern. Two parties, Liberals and Conservatives, offered competing economic and administrative visions for their new republic after independence. Initially, and mimicking contemporary legislative debates throughout the hemisphere --including those at the US constitutional convention in Philadelphia-- advocates of a strong a central-state, Conservatives, clashed with Liberal proponents of greater regional autonomy. Liberals, who were ascendant in the post-independence decades, selectively sought to eliminate political, economic, and social structures that they considered vestiges of colonialism. As elsewhere in Catholic Latin America, the two parties fought ferocious battles over the role of the Roman Catholic Church in government. Particularly problematic were attempts by Liberals to expand schooling because education had been controlled by the Church since the early colonial period. Liberal demands for secularization of instruction earned the wrath of the Church hierarchy and an anticlerical label. At the same time, Conservative defense of Church power forged a powerful political alliance that held in Colombian politics for more than a hundred years. While similar politics defined the post-independence decades throughout Latin America, Colombia's partisan, two-party politics sustained bitter intensity well into the twentieth century.

Brutal civil wars marked Colombia's nineteenth century as successively elected Liberals and Conservatives implemented and reversed each other's legislation and governing systems. In terms of suffrage and representation, the political system became more inclusive until late in that century when electoral restrictions were reinstated. The

Duke University Press, 1994), p. 371-373. The titles of major synthetic works on Colombian history suggest --and the analyses explore-- Colombia's tenuous claim to nationhood: David Bushnell, *The Making of Modern Colombia: A Nation in Spite of Itself* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Palacios, *Between Legitimacy and Violence*; Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society*.

two national parties garnered electoral and popular support through clientelism, a system in which political machines sustained broad loyalties through agreements with local and regional power players to whom they deferred and delivered national resources. An important theme in Colombian scholarship, clientelism fostered fierce party identification that cut across class and bridged the urban/rural divide that increasingly characterized the nation.¹⁷ Yet, because partisan loyalty was structured in a local context, it did not fortify the central-state and left regional states more powerful. Region not nation held greater relevancy in the lives of most Colombians into the mid-twentieth century.

With electoral victories in the 1880s, Conservatives began decades of control of the national government. Not until 1930 would a Liberal again hold the presidency of the republic. Early opposition to this “Conservative Hegemony” sparked new civil wars which were capped by the War of the Thousand Days in which perhaps 100,000 Colombians lost their lives. Toward the end of the three years of fighting in 1903, the remote but valuable province of Panama seceded from the nation. Bogotá had long supported the building of a transoceanic canal across the isthmus and, indeed, had contracted with the renowned French builders of the Suez Canal to do it. When the French project failed in the 1880s, the national government was too bogged down in civil warfare and too controlled by partisanship to craft political consensus on a new canal strategy.

US imperial ambitions played a role in Colombia’s loss of the isthmus, and revisionist history has emphasized that role. President Theodore Roosevelt’s

¹⁷ On clientelism through the twentieth century see John D. Martz, *The Politics of Clientelism: Democracy & the State in Colombia* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1996); Eduardo Posada-Carbó, ed., *Colombia: The Politics of Reforming the State* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998). Sanders’ study of nineteenth century Cauca challenges the notion that clientelism defined Colombian politics: Jamie Sanders, *Contentious Republicans, Popular Politics, Race and Class in Nineteenth-Century Colombia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

administration quickly recognized Panamanian independence, forcefully impeded Colombia's attempt to quell the insurrection, and immediately secured a territorial concession from the new government for the building of the canal. Yet, revisionist paradigms that focus on US imperialism have de-emphasized the Colombian complexities that also propelled Panama's secession. For the purpose of this dissertation, these complexities are important to acknowledge. Bogotá's inability to prevent Panamanian independence reveals the "weakness and uncertainty of Colombia's hold" over territories on the nation's periphery, coastal Colombia's marginalization within the Andean nation, and the debilitating effects of partisan violence on cohesive national identity.¹⁸

From the perspective of Colombian history, the loss of Panama is indicative of the disconnect that defined relations between the nation's regions and its central-state through the mid-twentieth century. Beholden to economic elites from the most developed and politically influential regions, incapable of enforcing legislative mandates nationally, inclined to let partisan warfare replace compromise, and ignorant of the cultures and needs of its rural and peripheral regions, the central-state was ineffective in fostering a unifying national consciousness. Facilitating rather than moderating historical rivalries over resources, the national government strengthened the hand of powerful regions at the expense of weaker ones. In this process, regions on the periphery of the Andean interior were especially marginalized. As a result, the government continually struggled to achieve and maintain legitimacy in the eyes of its own people. Thus the secession of Panama must be placed in proper Colombian perspective; the secession sits on a crowded

¹⁸ Palacios, *Between Legitimacy and Violence*, p. 42. See also Aims McGuinness, *Path of Empire: Panama and the Californian Gold Rush* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

historical continuum of regional rebellion against the elite controlled and ineffective Andean central-state. Violent rebellion against rule from Bogotá began with independence in the 1820s and continues into the present.

Compared to the urban Andes, many peripheral regions were beyond the interest of politicians in Bogotá through the early decades of the twentieth century. Though Caribbean coastal ports were essential to the nation's export economy, the non-elite majority in and around these cities had limited opportunities to interact with agents or symbols of the central-state. Government-supported schools, economic development programs, and infrastructural projects could have facilitated greater connections between the government and its distant coastal populations, but an inclusive national vision was absent in the allocation of resources. Additionally, official government projections of national identity or Colombianidad were framed by elite, urban Andean culture. When such projections reached peripheral and remote rural regions, they held little relevance to the lives of the populace. For many in those regions and especially the non-elite majority, the "imagined community" of Colombia was a difficult proposition to sustain.¹⁹

Many aspects of Andean culture were foreign to Colombians who lived in peripheral regions outside the mountainous interior. Most residents of the Caribbean coast, for example, would never travel in the interior and were unfamiliar with the traditions and patterns of Andean life. On that coast, locals lived in closer contact with the Greater Caribbean and worlds beyond. As compared to coast, the Andes were more isolated from modern currents and international trends; the cultures of the Colombian

¹⁹ As Benedict Anderson explains, modern nationalism only developed when individuals within consolidating states began to imagine themselves as part of broader national communities. In the fifteenth century, contemporary mass media technology facilitated this process; imagining a national community was an easier proposition after the invention of the printing press allowed for a wider reach of the written word. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006).

Caribbean were more cosmopolitan. To many Costeños, Andean culture was parochial, more focused on the past than the present, and overly formal. Even Andean Spanish, when heard on the coast, could be difficult to understand –filled as it was with archaic expression of the language. That definitions of Colombianidad emanating from the central-state were constructed in an Andean frame marginalized coastal and other peripheral cultures from the dominant formulation of national identity.

Adding to the cultural divides that challenged a unified Colombian identity was elite monopoly over the projection of Colombianidad. Colombian elite took the lifestyles of European upper classes as cultural models. In Bogotá as well as regional capitals throughout the nation, elite culture was laden with the trappings of European high culture: languages and expressions, education titles and degrees, clothing styles and accessories, musical trends and art forms, food and beverage tastes, and concepts of nation and citizenship. With elite projections of Colombianidad heavily infused by European high culture, the frame had limited the resonance among the non-elite majority.

New communication technologies and expanded educational opportunities would eventually provide a means for popular and middle-class Colombians to engage with and influence the discourse of Colombianidad as urbanization, industrialization, and modernity changed life patterns. However, until the 1930s the construction and projection of national identity remained monopolized by Andean elites. Since more than three-quarters of Colombia's population resided in that mountainous interior, it makes some sense that national identity would evolve in an Andean context. Though the population centers of the interior were themselves differentiated by geographic and cultural diversities, they had stronger economic, political, and cultural connections to the central

state. Thus, though claims of nationhood, of a Colombian national culture and Colombian identity were always tenuous, they had greater resonance in the urban Andes than along the nation's periphery.²⁰

In Pursuit of Modernity: Colombian-US Relations in the Early Twentieth Century

Colombia had entered the twentieth century desperate to recover from its most recent civil war and struggling to adapt to a modernizing world. The task was daunting and would require a degree of political consensus that the central-state had never been able to achieve: “whether measured in literacy: in the construction of railways, roads, and bridges; in the improvements of ports; or in urbanization or number of banks, Colombia remained among the less developed countries of the region.”²¹ Fortunately, coffee production provided a key economic stimulus. Though vulnerable to fluctuations in the global market, coffee became the undisputed engine of national development in the early twentieth century and helped consolidate the disjointed nation. It provided crucial capital for the expansion of state bureaucracy and the diversification of the national economy. By the 1950s, coffee beans accounted for almost three-quarters of total Colombian exports with the US purchasing the largest share of the crop. Compared with other key exports (bananas, oil, and precious metals) and the important textile industry based in Medellín, the coffee business developed as a unique agent of modernization and national integration. Because the coffee industry was almost exclusively Colombian owned and

²⁰ For a discussion of regional identity that touches upon these themes, see Roldán's overview of Antioqueño identity in her introduction. Mary Roldán, *Blood and Fire: La Violencia in Antioquia, Colombia, 1946-1953* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002). Posada-Carbó's analysis of Caribbean society --especially in the city of Barranquilla-- is additionally helpful. See Posada-Carbó, *The Colombian Caribbean*. Cultural identity on the Caribbean, the Chocó region, and Antioquia are important themes of Wade's impressive analyses of Colombia: Peter Wade, *Music, Race, & Nation: Musica Tropical in Colombia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) and *Blackness and Race Mixture: The Dynamics of Racial Identity in Colombia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

²¹ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society*, p. 251

not dependent on foreign technology, it provided needed stability for regional Andean economies while limiting national reliance on foreign investment. As coffee consumption spread from the Andes to the periphery with the growth of bean exports, it also evolved into a popular symbol of Colombian national culture.²²

Driven by coffee exports in the first third of the twentieth century, Conservatives initiated a restructuring of the Colombian economy that produced some export diversification, pockets of industrial growth, and higher levels of urbanization. To guide development, they contracted foreign missions to shape more stable financial institutions, build an integrated national transportation network, and recommend methods for expanding educational infrastructure. In the Andean interior, which received most of the new resources, expanding government bureaucracy extended the reach of the central-state and facilitated the wider cultivation of Colombian national identity. While partisanship had not disappeared at the level of governance, consensus over the need to modernize the nation did emerge and it allowed for a reduction in violence among partisans. Temporarily, civil war was eliminated as a national political strategy. Owing to coffee, consistent rule by a single party, and emergent political consensus over the need to modernize, Colombia was a very different country by the end of the 1920s when the global depression hit.

Colombian-US relations were strained in the aftermath of Panamanian independence, and official resolution did not come until Colombia formally accepted an indemnity payment of \$25 million from Washington in the early 1920s. Controversies

²² Michael Jiménez, "The Limits of Export Capitalism: Economic Structure, Class, and Politics in a Colombian Coffee Municipality, 1900-1930" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1985); Marco Palacios, *Coffee in Colombia 1850-1970: An Economic, Social, and Political History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Bennet Eugene Koffman, "The National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia" (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 1969); Charles W. Bergquist, *Coffee and Conflict in Colombia, 1886-1910* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1978).

still arose, but from that point forward Colombia's political leaders consistently embraced the doctrine of the "North Star"; they pragmatically accepted aspects of US economic and political hegemony and pursued the benefits of working with, rather than against, its powerful hemispheric neighbor.²³ Shared faith in capitalist modernity, theoretical commitment to democratic government, and, later, a passion for fighting communism grounded the binational relationship.

Significantly, economic relations between the two nations had proceeded apace during the two decades of frozen diplomacy that preceded the settlement, and the onset of World War I had seriously impacted these economic relations. Unable to export agricultural and mining products to war-torn European markets, the Colombian economy turned north to the US. Investment in Colombia by US corporations increased during and after the war, and US products and financial services gained a presence in the urban centers of the nation. Settlement of the Panama controversy provided a huge influx to the national treasury that further energized the economy. While the indemnity payment funded important national infrastructural projects, it also provided leverage for an enormous extension of credit to individual Colombian *departamentos* [departments or provinces] and municipalities by US banks. In addition, the Colombian government welcomed the participation of US capital and oil corporations in its nascent petroleum industry.

When economic depression began to create havoc in international relationships at the end of the 1920s, the Colombian economy was linked to the US by exports, debt, and foreign investment. Still, the overall national economy remained largely underdeveloped and with less international dependence. Colombia certainly suffered in the economic

²³ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society*, p. 280.

crisis, but it suffered less than many Latin American nations whose primary national industries were more dependent on foreign capital. Colombia's coffee exports declined after 1929 but because all of its exports then comprised only 25% of gross domestic product (GDP), Colombia was buffered from what would have been a greater disaster if it had been more export dependent.²⁴

Relative to its regional neighbors, Colombia resisted the politics of economic nationalism in the depression and throughout the twentieth century. Where concern over foreign control of regional and national industries elicited anti-foreign sentiments in Latin America, nationalizations of foreign owned or affiliated industries occurred with some frequency.²⁵ In Colombia, however, as David Bushnell explains, national control of the coffee industry had the effect of depriving "economic nationalism ... of a key target."²⁶ In the first half of the twentieth century, periodic appeals to economic nationalism did arise in Colombia from organized labor in oil fields and on banana plantations where US corporations were the dominant foreign presence. However, given national control over the coffee industry, economic nationalism as an "aggressive force" never had broad appeal and was much more muted in Colombia than elsewhere in Latin America.

In 1930, amidst global economic depression, elections brought Liberals to power for the first time in the century. At the national level, leaders of both parties together with representatives of the powerful coffee and industrial lobbies were determined to avoid violence during the transfer of power. In a departure from tradition, they were successful. Yet, violence characterized the transfers at lower levels. As Liberals across the country

²⁴ Ibid., p. 275.

²⁵ Paul E. Sigmund, *Multinationals in Latin America: The Politics of Nationalization* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980); Richard Newbold Adams, *Nationalization* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967).

²⁶ Bushnell, *The Making of Modern Colombia*, p. 174.

regained control of the local resources they had been denied since the late 1800s, they took revenge on local and regional Conservatives whose dominance they had endured for decades. The contrast of a peaceful central-state transfer with bloodshed in Colombian regions underscored the difficult realities the new government faced: a continuing rift more than a century after independence between the national government and the citizenry; the persistent dominance of regional over national identity; the corrupting influence of patronage (clientelism) on democratic processes; and the fact that violence was still perceived as a legitimate political strategy by many Colombians.

Around the globe, economic depression bred reactionary governments, which cultivated support through extreme appeals to nationalism. Fascist and military dictators who came to power in the 1930s cultivated patriotism and manipulated its sentiments to gain broad public support for their rule. As Colombia's new Liberal governments confronted the economic crisis and the challenge of modernization, they too employed nationalistic appeals, but moderation rather than radicalism defined their programs. Like FDR in the 1930s, Liberal administrations in Colombia took an activist role in restructuring and directing the national economy, modernizing government bureaucracy, and addressing social problems that were obstacles to their national reforms. To Conservatives who had held power for so many decades, Liberal reforms appeared radical. The courting of socialist and communist support, defense of labor activism, and broad expansion of the electorate alarmed their opponents. Most importantly, as relates to this study, Liberals' attempts to restrict Church control over the national education system reignited secularization debates. Yet, Liberal programs represented an effort to prevent and not promote revolutionary change as national elites pursued modernity.

Historiographical Considerations

National Identity and Region in Colombia

Colombia, it has long been observed, is a country of diverse regions. Owing to geographical extremes and the regional isolation that results, many Colombians see their country as *un país de países* [a country of many countries]. Historically, poor communication and transportation between and within Andean, Pacific, Caribbean, Amazonian, and Orinocan regions contributed to the perpetual weakness of central state. Regional cultures flourished in relative isolation from the political center, and the notion of Colombianidad as a unifying force was difficult to sustain.

During the period under consideration (1930s-1960s) Colombian government efforts to modernize the nation involved expanding educational infrastructure and promoting unifying national consciousness. The chapters that follow examine the growth of US cultural influence during a period of accelerated cultural change that was fueled from inside and outside the Colombian government. US-sponsored educational and cultural programs are explored in their regional Colombian settings: in the Caribbean cities of Barranquilla and Cartagena and the Andean cities of Bogotá and Medellín. In focusing on programs in both Andean and Caribbean Colombia, the study engages two central and overlapping themes of modern Colombian historiography: regionalism and the construction of national identity. Both are relevant to the analysis of the foreign/local encounters here examined.

Until the mid-twentieth century, historical scholarship within Colombia was restricted by a straitjacket of partisan politics. Histories of the nation were written by party loyalists that privileged the power of the central state and ascribed it undue

legitimacy and control.²⁷ In this literature and in the functioning of national politics, the Andean region and its key centers of power, Bogotá and Medellín, defined the nation. Areas on the periphery of the mountain peaks, plains and valleys of the nation's interior were marginalized in official versions of history and official frames of culture. National history (*historia patria*) presented Colombia as a politically and culturally cohesive, Catholic and Andean state, and it gave little attention to the Caribbean coast or other peripheral areas.

The complexities of region became more central to historical analysis after production of partisan scholarship decreased. After mid-century as historians sought to explain Colombia's inability to prevent violence and rebellion across the centuries, regionalism received increased analytical attention. Scholars generally agreed that the development of Colombian regions was grounded by the nation's geographic complexity, but this was not an embrace of geographic determinism; scholars in second half of the twentieth century recognized that geography alone was not constitutive of regionalism. Given the extremes of physical separation within the Andean interior, on both coasts, and in the peripheral river basins, distinct local cultures did indeed develop in relative isolation. During the colonial times, the various regions engaged the resources and constraints that their natural surroundings imposed, and they developed distinct political, economic, and social traditions that would later make them identifiable within an emerging nation.²⁸ Colombian regionalism, however, is not just a legacy of colonialism.

²⁷ Helpful bibliographic overviews are found in Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society*, pp. 371-385; and Palacios, *Between Legitimacy and Violence*, pp. 269-291.

²⁸ Anthony McFarlane, *Colombia before Independence: Economy, Society, and Politics under Bourbon Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Alfonso Múnera, *El Fracaso de la Nación: Región, clase y raza en el Caribe colombiano, 1717-1810* (Bogotá: Banco de la República, 1998); María Teresa Uribe de Hincapié, *Raíces del poder regional: El caso antioqueño* (Medellín: Editorial Universidad de Antioquia, 1998).

It is also a modern construction informed by political and social processes. For example, the post-independence, nation-building projects of the central state have been crucial to the construction of region. On the one hand, national governments representing a narrow band of Andean elites sustained their tentative grasp on power by keeping regional power bases separate. With a monopoly on education and media, these elite were able to project their characterizations of regions to the broader nation. In this process, the marginalized regions on the periphery were defined from the center, and they suffered the biases of elite Andeans.²⁹ Yet, regionalism was also a political force that could be employed against the central-state --in reaction to its efforts to consolidate power, its exclusion of certain regions from development projects, and in inter-regional disagreements over resource allocation.³⁰ Scholarship probing the intersection of race and region has added much nuance to our understanding of the development of Colombian regionalism as a complex historical process.³¹

Increased scholarly attention has turned to Colombia's Caribbean region in the last quarter century.³² In tandem with socio-political movements addressing the region's underdevelopment, scholars have begun to consider Caribbean Colombia's marginalization within the nation. Studies by social scientists, anthropologists, and historians have articulated the tremendous geographic, cultural, and economic diversity

²⁹ Franciso Avella, "El papel de la geohistoria para construcción de la región Caribe" in *El Caribe en la nación colombiana: Memorias*, ed. Alberto Abello Vives (Bogotá: Museo Nacional de Colombia, 2006), pp. 106-122.

³⁰ Posada-Carbó, *The Colombian Caribbean*; Roldán, *Blood and Fire*.

³¹ Works by Peter Wade and Nancy Appelbaum examine how regions were (and are) constructed by racial order and racialized discourse: Wade, *Blackness and Race Mixture*; Nancy Appelbaum, *Muddied Waters: Race, Region, and Local History in Colombia, 1846-1948* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

³² Alberto Abello Vives, ed., *El Caribe en la nación colombiana: Memorias* (Bogotá: Museo Nacional de Colombia, 2006); XIII Congreso de Colombianistas, *Colombia y el Caribe* (Barranquilla: Ediciones Uninorte, 2005); Ariel Castillo Mier, ed., *Respirando el Caribe: Memorias de la Cátedra del Caribe Colombiano* (Bogotá: Observatorio del Caribe Colombiano, 2001).

of region. Their work has begun to consider how national culture was homogenized in an Andean mold, to document the invisibility of Costeños in Colombian narratives, and to challenge stereotypes of the region's people and their cultures.³³ Some Colombian scholars rejoice that the boom in regional research has begun to free the coast from a "historiographic prison" [*cárcel historiográfica*] to which it had been confined.³⁴ This dissertation takes inspiration from such scholarship that challenges narrow Andean frames of Colombian history and culture. In analyzing Colombian-US encounters in both Andean and Caribbean settings, the study seeks to join scholarly efforts to reinsert the Colombian Caribbean into analyses of the nation.

An important aspect of this historiographical trend has been new attention to coast's relationship not just to the Andes but to the Greater Caribbean. With a 1,600 km Caribbean coastline, half a million square kilometers of territory in that sea, and populated Colombian islands as far north as the Nicaraguan coast (where the locals speak creole English), Colombia has long had a presence in the multinational world of *el caribe* [the Caribbean]. The minimal attention afforded *la costa* in narratives of the twentieth century has left the nation's connections, and especially its cultural connections, to the Greater Caribbean inadequately explored.³⁵ While Panamanian independence greatly decreased the interest of the Andean elites in the north coast, the new historiography recognizes that the region's ties to the Caribbean basin were not severed at that time.

Post-Panama, Colombia's Caribbean region remained an important site of foreign/local

³³ Alberto Abello Vives, "Una catedra para entender el Caribe: superar los estereotipos," in *El Caribe en la nación colombiana: Memorias*, p. 21-30. See in the same volume: Luis Alarcón Meneses, "Representaciones sociales y políticas sobre el Caribe colombiano," pp. 214-236; Cristo Figueroa Sanchez, "Cultura: Introducción," pp. 371-376.

³⁴ José Pole Acuña, "Desde la otra orilla: las fronteras del Caribe en la 'historia nacional,'" in *El Caribe en la nación colombiana: Memorias*, ed. Alberto Abello Vives (Bogotá: Museo Nacional de Colombia, 2006), p. 177.

³⁵ XIII Congreso de Colombianistas, *Colombia y el Caribe*, p. 24.

encounters, where transnational currents impacted regional development and the construction of Costeño identities. Scholars now argue that Colombia's Caribbean coast and its territories should be explored as a frontier: a dynamic border within a multinational world. Ignoring regional complexities that are rooted beyond the nation's northern shore, traditional Colombian historiography "has not permitted comprehension of the historic processes of the region."³⁶

Contact Zones, Imperialism and Dependency

Adapting Mary Louise Pratt's definition of "contact zones," I view the transnational cultural communities that evolve on the Caribbean and in the Andes as sites where "peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations."³⁷ Like Pratt, I am interested in the "interactive, improvisational dimensions" of the foreign/local encounter that are "so easily ignored or suppressed" by analytical predisposition to finding "conquest and domination."³⁸ When we look too intently for the imperialist, the communist, the foreign invader or their agents, we miss the diversity and sinuosity of cultural contact. In looking to the "contact zones," this study supplements existing macro-political views of the Colombian-US

³⁶ "...no ha permitido la comprensión de los procesos históricos de esta región." José Pole Acuña, "Desde la otra orilla: las fronteras del Caribe en la 'historia nacional,'" in *El Caribe en la nación colombiana: Memorias*, ed. Alberto Abello Vives (Bogotá: Museo Nacional de Colombia, 2006), pp. 172. The literature has been growing over the past two decades. On the colonial period see Alfonso David Múnera, "Failing to Construct the Colombian Nation: Race and Class in the Andean-Caribbean Conflict" (PhD diss., University of Connecticut, 1995). On the spread of Caribbean and Costeño music into the interior during the mid-twentieth century see Wade, *Music, Race, & Nation*. See also Posada-Carbó, *The Colombian Caribbean*.

³⁷ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 6. Pratt's study of the process of transculturation as seen in travel narratives is focused on colonial and post-colonial cultures and belongs to the fields of cultural studies and literary analysis. She frames "contact zones" specifically as spaces of "colonial encounters" and then problematizes that very frame. Yet, she recognizes the utility of "contact zones" for exploring relationships outside the colonized/colonizer dichotomy, and she suggests that classrooms are "contact zones" conditioned by student/teacher relationships. See Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone" in *Ways of Reading*, eds. David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 1999), p. 34.

³⁸ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 7

relationship with regional, local, and community cultural perspectives that prove less useful for marking difference than for revealing “copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices” even where “radically asymmetrical relations of power” might be identifiable.³⁹

The contact zones explored in the historiography of Latin America-US relations during most of the twentieth century were usually economic, political and military sites: diplomatic bureaucracies and legislative chambers, oil fields and banana plantations of US corporations, and military occupation zones. Cultural sites were rarely considered. When more intimate cultural interaction between US and Latin American nationals was presented in scholarship, it was generally restricted to social descriptions of diplomatic high society or military engagements.

Diplomacy and economics dominated the historiography of US foreign relations for much of the twentieth century. Before the 1950s, many historians of US foreign relations wrote within the consensus or traditional school. Their analyses focused on diplomatic negotiation and foreign policy strategy, and they viewed US foreign policy as well-intentioned and largely successful in meeting noble objectives. Relatively few of them addressed Latin America, but those who did regarded paternalistic US policies in the region favorably.⁴⁰ The realist school, which supplanted the consensus approach, was

³⁹ Ibid. In employing Pratt’s concept, this study follows the lead of scholars who probe the contact zones of Latin American-US encounters. See Gilbert M. Joseph, Catherine C. LeGrand, and Ricardo Salvatore, eds., *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998).

⁴⁰ Trends in historiography condition analyses of US-Latin American relations. The traditional or consensus school (sometimes called the national school) focused on domestic politics and foreign policy strategies. US activity abroad was usually presented as a reaction to a foreign event, rather than motivated by pressure from within. US imperialist ventures were generally viewed as temporary mistakes that were soon reversed. For Latin America analysis in this tradition see Samuel Flagg Bemis, *The Latin American Policy of the United States: An Historical Interpretation*, (NY: W.W. Norton, 1967). Bemis argued that US policies in Latin America were geared toward helping nations succeed as functioning democracies.

influenced by the increasingly polarized politics of the early Cold War. Though more critical of US policies than consensus historians, realists took a pragmatic approach to detailing international power struggles, articulating the options policymakers faced, and assessing the outcomes of decisions. They emphasized elite power politics, and like the consensus historians before them and the revisionist school that followed them, their analyses were almost exclusively based on US archival sources. In approaching Latin America, many realists (joining with social scientists and politicians) focused on the challenges of modernization. Their analyses demonstrated faith in a diffusionist model of development under which Latin America would modernize with guidance and resources transferred from the US and other developed capitalist economies.⁴¹

Appearing in the 1960s, the revisionist school was highly critical of US foreign policy, which it framed as a tool of US economic interests. Revisionist historians rejected diffusionist theories and policymakers who argued that development and modernity would filter down to the “third world” via foreign investment and leadership. They argued that the principal objective of US foreign policy had long been the global maintenance of an “open door” for US foreign investment. Narrowly framing foreign policy as economic policy and highlighting the imperialist past and the neo-imperialist present of the US, revisionist historians had tremendous influence on the historiography of Latin American-US relations. Indeed, Latin America was an increasingly important

⁴¹ Historians of the realist tradition viewed conflict as a natural element of international relationships because each nation’s foreign policy is built upon self-interest. Domestic politics were not considered important determinants of foreign policy and received little attention. Latin America was infrequently considered in analysis of US foreign relations. See for example John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972). For examples of the Latin American case treated in the realist tradition see J. Fred Rippy, *Globe and Hemisphere: Latin America’s Place in Post-War Foreign Relations of the United States* (Chicago: H. Regnery, 1958); Seymour Martin Lipset and Aldo Solari, eds., *Elites in Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967); and Jacques Lambert, *Latin America: Social Structure and Political Institutions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

theme in revisionist scholarship; the new formulations of empire and neo-imperialism by William Appleman Williams and other influential revisionists heavily considered the relationship between economic foreign policy, US territorial expansion and military intervention in the Central America and the Caribbean Basin.⁴²

Many politicians, intellectuals, and students in Latin America, from the far left to the far right of the political spectrum, were receptive to the critical turn in US scholarship. In so far as the region was perceived as a potential target of international communism, Washington considered it important. However, Latin American agendas that addressed issues marginal to the Soviet-US conflict were largely ignored by US diplomats. As a result, there was a developing sense among Latin Americans that the US “Cold War fixation entailed neglect and subordination” and that “it perpetuated ongoing patterns of the exploitation and underdevelopment.”⁴³ Revisionist-influenced theories of dependency grew out of this frustration and drew upon the strength of anti-imperialist politics in the region.

Dependency theory entered the historiography of US-Latin American relations in the early Cold War and was well established as a dominant trend in the 1970s. Though waning by the 1990s, its influence has been broad. In its basic formulation, the theory

⁴² Revisionist historians focused on capitalism and its role in US expansion. Domestic economic concerns were seen as prime motivators of US foreign policy. A basic contention of this school was that US foreign policy was informally imperialist and that economic foreign policy was tied to both traditional and non-traditional forms of territorial expansion. See Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1963); William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: Delta, 1962) and *The Roots of the Modern American Empire* (New York: Vintage, 1969). World Systems theory later developed in the revisionist tradition as a response to critiques that revisionism too narrowly placed domestic economics at the root of foreign policies. While maintaining the primacy of economics in US foreign relations, it introduced a model with a broader international context and gave greater attention to strategic objectives and military power. See Thomas J. McCormick, *America's Half Century: United States Foreign Policy in the Cold War and After* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

⁴³ Mark T. Gilderhus, *The Second Century: US-Latin American Relations Since 1889* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2000), p. 194.

was a Marxist-influenced argument that assigned blame for the conditions of poverty in the underdeveloped world to capitalist powers. Latin America, dependency theorists argued, was maintained in a state of underdevelopment through its dependence on the capitalist controlled world financial system, which restricted the regions' role in the global economy to the exporting of raw materials and primary products.⁴⁴

Notably, both scholarly dependency theory in the US and anti-dependency politics in Latin American (with which it was closely tied) departed from the revisionist tradition in conceding a role for culture in the political economy. Yet, in the Marxist tradition, culture was only analyzed within the context of a totalizing capitalist system. Dependency theorists saw culture as an “ideological instrument” employed for the spread of capitalism.⁴⁵ With cultural experience always subordinated to economic processes, dependency theorists were not prepared to see diversity and complexity in Latin American-US cultural interaction. Though they were better at recognizing cultural contact zones than scholars of earlier generations, historians employing dependency frames were constrained by their own rigid oppositional dichotomies (capitalism/Marxism, imperialism/anti-imperialism, developed/underdeveloped) from thoughtful exploration of cultural interaction in local rather than global context. Because they were inclined to see dominance and averse to recognizing collaboration and reciprocity in foreign/local encounters, dependency theorists often defined cultural interaction in the vein of imperialism. They charge US culture --manifest as language, mass media, consumer goods, lifestyle, and especially higher education-- with erasing

⁴⁴ As examples see: André Gunder Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967); Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, *Dependencia y desarrollo en América Latina* (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno, 1971); Ronald H. Chilcote and Joel C. Edelman, eds., *Latin America: The Struggle with Dependency and Beyond* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974).

⁴⁵ John Tomlinson, *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), pp. 135-6.

local culture. As the US solidified its status as an economic, military and political superpower in the post-war world and US commercial and cultural products became more conspicuous in foreign markets, they expressed increasing fear that foreign cultural domination would destroy “authentic” local and national cultures.⁴⁶ Thus, through the dominance of dependency theory, simplified notions of cultural imperialism gained and retained currency in scholarly literature and public consciousness.⁴⁷

As John Tomlinson suggests, no “coherent thesis” was employed by those who have charged the US with cultural imperialism. It was engaged differently from all quarters. In academic and leftist analyses of Latin American-US relations, cultural imperialism was most often employed in critiques of the expansion of US media. Such critiques presumed the power of film, radio, television, print publications, and advertising to change or “colonize” culture.⁴⁸ Reflecting class prejudices of Latin American intellectuals toward the lower classes, a pronounced concern for the vulnerability of the masses to US ideological manipulation via comic strips, animated cartoons, paperback

⁴⁶ Mass media became a popular focus of scholarly inquiry in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Media studies emerged as an academic field, but many other disciplines explored the subject as well. Employing revisionist paradigms, much of the scholarship sounded an alarm that communications media fostered government and corporate control of the masses; as this scholarship considered the transnational reach of mass media, both media imperialism and cultural imperialism became common themes. See for example Herbert I. Schiller, *Communication and Cultural Domination* (White Plains: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1976). Within revisionist treatments of US-Latin American relations --both academic and political-- US mass media outlets were often defined as forces of cultural imperialism: Fred Fejes, *Imperialism, Media, and the Good Neighbor: New Deal Foreign Policy and United States Short-Wave Broadcasting in Latin America* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1976); Gaizka S. de Usabel, *The High Noon of American Films in Latin America* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982); Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart, *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic*, David Kunzle, trans. (New York: International General, 1982); Leonardo Acosta, Virginia Erhart, and Pastor Vega, *Penetración Cultural de Imperialismo en America Latina: Comics y Revistas Femeninas* (Bogotá: Ediciones Los Comunereros, 1973); Nguyen Khac Vien, *Breve Historia del Neocolonialismo Norteamericano* (Medellín: Editorial La Oveja Negra, 1973).

⁴⁷ See Gilbert M. Joseph, “Close Encounters: Toward a New Cultural History of US-Latin American Relations,” in Gilbert M. Joseph, Catherine C. LeGrand, and Ricardo Salvatore, eds., *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), pp. 3-46.

⁴⁸ Tomlinson, *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction*. See Chapter 2: “Cultural Imperialism as Media Imperialism.”

books, television soap operas, and women's magazines was a characteristic theme of the literature.⁴⁹ Charges of cultural imperialism were also common in broader critiques of capitalism and modernity, which sounded the alarm against the increasing visibility of US consumer goods in local markets. Like the analysts who charged media imperialism, those who focused on culture as a capitalist commodity imprecisely ascribed power and meaning to US media and commercial products. Effect from consumer goods, cultural interaction, and media reach was commonly assumed but infrequently articulated. Finally, allegations of cultural imperialism also proved popular within discourses of national identity. Identifying US culture as an invading force, national governments or others could manipulate identity politics to gain leverage for their own national projects.⁵⁰

Significantly, for the purpose of this dissertation, some US educational institutions and US-sponsored education projects were charged with facilitating US cultural imperialism around the world. As culture was scrutinized as a capitalist tool, “the demonology of the imperialist other was extended not only to the North American corporations, policymakers, and military agents, but also to cultural brokers and institutions of higher learning.” In the process, “university professors, librarians, and foundation workers were charged with constituting the new imperialist front.”⁵¹

Arguments against US-sponsored education projects in foreign countries have historically focused on higher education programs. Exchanges that brought foreigners to

⁴⁹ Acosta, Erhart, and Vega, *Penetración Cultural de Imperialismo en America Latina*.

⁵⁰ Tomlinson, *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction*. On Cultural Imperialism as a critique of capitalism, as a critique of modernity, and as part of the discourse on national identity, see chapter 4, chapter 5, and chapter 3, respectively. Tomlinson argues that cultural imperialism is best framed as the “spread of modernity” because it encompasses critiques of media imperialism and capitalism along with discourses of national identity.

⁵¹ Joseph, “Close Encounters: Toward a New Cultural History of US-Latin American Relations,” p. 13.

the US for university study were harshly dismissed as indoctrination programs that stripped individuals of their authentic, national cultures and created surrogates for US-led capitalism. Illustrative is the explanation by Nguyen Khac Vien of the role of education in securing local support for the US global agenda; in a Spanish-language paperback that was translated and published in Medellín in 1973, the Vietnamese Marxist charged that foreign students and intellectuals were awarded...

*scholarships, trips to the United States and important positions in international organizations. In the United States, they adopt a North American lifestyle and a North American mindset; they are overwhelmed by the material power of the yanqui and they are placed in the hands of organizations that guide them politically, converting them little by little to Washington loyalists. Once they have returned to their countries, these intellectuals, with the financial and technical assistance from the United States, organize unions, student organizations and political parties trying to create a social base and ideological justification for their social classes, which are in the service of neocolonialism.*⁵²

Elite Latin American families had historically sent their sons to Europe for university educations. They studied in Spain, Italy, England, Belgium, and especially France. Yet, by the second half of the twentieth century more and more of Latin America's sons and daughters were choosing an education in the US. This change, and

⁵² “Muchos estudiantes e intelectuales de países subdesarrollados están así contactados y alistados; se les ofrecen becas, viajes de estudio a Estados Unidos y puestos importantes en organizaciones internacionales. En Estados Unidos ellos adoptan el modo de vida norteamericano y el modo norteamericano de pensar; son deslumbrados por el poder material yanqui y se ponen bajo la tutela de organizaciones que los guían políticamente, convirtiéndolos poco a poco en hombres fieles a Washington. Una vez que han regresado a sus países, estos intelectuales, con la ayuda financiera y la asistencia “técnica” de Estados Unidos, organizan sindicatos, organizaciones estudiantiles y partidos políticos, tratando de crear una base social y justificaciones ideológicas para las clases sociales que están al servicio del neocolonialismo.” Nguyen Khac Vien, *Breve Historia*, p. 51. The ease of transnational communication that developed across the 20th century facilitated the sharing of resources not just among governments and industries but intellectuals, political activists, and educational communities as well. Critiques of US imperialism, or more commonly neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism, were produced around the globe. Marxists intellectuals and scholars, among others, borrowed arguments and shared materials produced in regional campaigns against the US. Much of the anti-imperialist material in popular circulation in Colombia during the 20th century originated abroad and was reprinted locally (with an introduction providing local grounding). The remnants of these materials, which were usually printed at low cost and, thus, on low quality paper, are to be found not in Colombian libraries but in the used bookstores and street book stalls that are fixtures in the capital and other major cities.

the shift in elite Latin American cultural orientation from Europe to North America provided ammunition for critics across the political spectrum; in Colombia and Latin America such critics equated formal education, training, or living experience in the US with the loss of national identity. With growth in the number of Latin Americans awarded US educational credentials --diplomas, degrees, certificates, and titles-- multiplying in the years following World War II, charges of cultural imperialism increased.

Charges of cultural imperialism that centered on US education almost exclusively focused on higher education. In doing so, they ignored the reality that Latin Americans experiences with US education systems, bureaucracies, institutions, models, ideologies, and methodologies were not limited to the university level. By the time theories of dependency and cultural imperialism had come into academic and political vogue in Latin America during the 1960s (and in the US shortly thereafter), many Latin Americans had engaged in US-sponsored or US-influenced education programs at home. Schools were the most obvious way such engagement unfolded and this was not confined to the American schools that were sanctioned by the Department of State. US-styled schools at the primary and secondary level had been introduced in the urban centers of the region by Protestant missionaries in the mid-nineteenth century. As US businesses established a stronger Latin American presence after World War I, they, too, became founders of US-type schools, which served the children of both their US and local employees; when formal US cultural diplomacy began in the late 1930s, independent and non-secular American schools joined this mix. Taken together, these schools introduced US-modeled education below the university level to a wide range of social and economic classes.

In addition to the traditional education programs based in primary and secondary schools, other US-style education programs proliferated in the region. The decision at mid-century by many Latin American governments to require English language study in national secondary schools formalized a role for “American English” in the region. The spread of English language learning centers, like (but not restricted to) the Colombo-Americanos, in urban areas was a related educational phenomenon. Another major addition to educational cityscapes of the period were public and private libraries. Many developed with the professional support of US-trained librarians who introduced US books, information classification systems, and other elements of library science. Advances in print technology and growth in the publishing industry also played a role in the widening US presence in Latin American education. Translation of English-language educational materials into Spanish was an enormous US undertaking through the early Cold War. Included among the non-commercial print resources circulated by the US inside and outside of libraries and schools were cultural magazines, textbooks, bibliographies, US literary “classics”, and comic books. Finally, with modernization of national economies a prime objective of local government and business elites, new vocational, business, and technical training programs also developed with noteworthy US support.

Cultural History and Questions of Dominance

As an analytical frame, dependency theory was on the decline by the late 1980s, but attention to the role of culture in US-Latin American relations did not fade. To the contrary, interest increased substantially. A boom in post-colonial scholarship helped to fuel this process; placing cultural encounters at the center of inquiry, post-colonialism

sought to explain how local identities and culture developed in the wake of imperialism. Social scientists continued to pursue cultural questions as well, and they opened new paths for research that encouraged interdisciplinary scholarship. Simultaneously, within the discipline of history, the formerly minor sub-field of cultural history was gaining new stature. Increasingly, studies of US history, Latin American history and inter-American relations placed new emphasis on the ways culture constructs and is constructed by social, political, and economic relationships. Significantly, as the century drew to a close, culture was no longer dismissed as an adjunct to economics and politics.

This dissertation takes inspiration and direction from research that positions culture beside, and not behind, politics and economics in analyses of Latin American-US relations, US foreign policy and US history more generally. Since the 1990s, work in the fields of cultural history and cultural studies have moved scholarship beyond the constraints of political economy to reveal social complexities that were formerly masked in traditional, state-centered political and economic narratives. Historical analysis of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality has been particularly effective toward this end.⁵³ New analytical approaches to media, religion, education, philanthropy, marriage, arts and entertainment, sports, community and travel are also redefining narrow views of inter-American cultural relationships.⁵⁴

⁵³ Examining the ways state power is constructed and contested through cultural processes has been a significant trend in this literature. On race/ethnicity in Latin America and the construction of nation see Nancy P. Appelbaum, Anne S. Macpherson, and Karin A. Rosenblatt, eds., *Race & Nation in Modern Latin America*. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003). On gender/sexuality in Latin America see Elizabeth Dore and Maxine Molyneux, eds., *Hidden Histories of Gender and State in Latin America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000). I take particular inspiration from studies of US foreign policy and race that blur divisions between foreign and domestic affairs. See especially: Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

⁵⁴ Joseph, LeGrand, Salvatore, eds., *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of US-Latin American Relation*; Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease, eds., *Cultures of United States Imperialism*.

With the turn toward culture in scholarship, more complex views of foreign/local encounters emerged and simplified notions of cultural imperialism lost currency. Questions of imperialism remained at the center of inquiry, but as research shifted away from metropolitan archives and closer to sites of cultural contact, previously overlooked dynamics within contact zones complicated analyses of dominance. The oppositional dichotomy of coercion/consent, which had often been employed in such analysis, was reconsidered. That coercion alone did not secure the dominance of one group over another --that it required the intellectual consent of the dominated-- had long been understood. Yet, charges of cultural imperialism had always rested more heavily on the coercive side of the equation. Attention to local realities in contact zones, however, produced more nuanced articulations of how consent was granted.⁵⁵ At the same time, research in contact zones also forced reconsideration of the foreign/local oppositional dichotomy itself. New analysis clouded the categories “foreign” and “local” revealing that they were not always oppositional, mutually exclusive nor jointly exhaustive of the range of local realities. Questioning the dichotomy, scholarship began to consider how complex regional, national, and transnational influences construct local culture.

Studies of post-colonialism, inter-American relations and US history continue to probe the intersection of culture and imperialism because the US had a formal empire

(Durham: Duke University Press, 1990); Reinhold Wagnleitner and Elaine Tyler May, eds., *“Here, There and Everywhere”*: *The Foreign Politics of American Popular Culture* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2000); Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spencer, eds., *In From the Cold: Latin America’s New Encounter with the Cold War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008). Baseball has received significant attention: Louis A. Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Alan M. Klein, *Sugarball: The American Game, the Dominican Dream* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); Rob Ruck, *The Tropic of Baseball: Baseball in the Dominican Republic* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); Adrian Burgos, Jr., *Playing America’s Game: Baseball, Latinos, and the Color Line* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

⁵⁵ In this regard, scholarship was influenced by Gramsci’s theory of hegemony. See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, eds., Quintan Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971).

during the twentieth century; because it continued to have one at the start of the next century; and because it has had substantial influence on the world economy and in international politics. That the US exercised strong influence over Latin America in some significant areas is clear. In economic affairs, for example, the US share of world markets and leadership of global financial systems gave Washington a dominant influence over economic policies and processes of some Latin American nations. Owing to its global leadership during and after World War II, its early leadership within the Organization of American States and the United Nations, and the weight of its polarizing campaign against global communism, US political influence in the region has been periodically dominant as well. Yet, we cannot casually assume that strong US influence over specific economic or political developments afforded it dominance in all other realms. It is crucial to see that US influence was never total, often temporary, and always challenged. And it is incumbent upon historians of inter-American relations not to assume US dominance without articulating precisely the context in which the relationship existed.⁵⁶

Toward understanding Latin American-US relations during the twentieth century, imperialist paradigms are and will continue to be useful to scholars. Yet, we must also recognize the limits of the frames. To the extent that studies of empire emphasize power relationships and privilege the oppositional dichotomies (coercion/consent and foreign/local), they will offer only limited views of relationships that defy the dichotomy. Not all encounters between foreign and local ideas, resources, and individuals are reducible to those power relationships that exist in their midst. Furthermore, not all ideas,

⁵⁶ Derek Sayer, James C. Scott, and Alan Knight, for example, are critical of scholarship that too casually “infers” hegemony. Derek Sayer, “Everyday Forms of State Formation: Some Dissident Remarks on Hegemony” in *Everyday Forms of State Formation*, p. 367-377. See also in the same volume: James C. Scott, “Forward.” p. xi; Alan Knight, “Weapons and Arches in the Mexican Revolutionary Landscape,” p. 24-66.

resources and individuals can be so tightly categorized as uniquely foreign or decidedly local. For the purpose of this study, approaching US-sponsored educational and cultural projects through the lens of power relationships restricts our ability to see how transnational collaboration evolves through common interests, intersecting needs, and shared philosophy rather than through coerced or consensual submission to foreign authority.

Within educational settings, a multitude of power relationships are certainly observable, and we might easily frame them using the oppositional dichotomy of coercion/consent. National governments mandate curriculum, school administrators hire and fire staff, and classroom teachers discipline students. Other forms of power that impact learning are identifiable as well: gender, class, and race/ethnic constructs have historically influenced who goes to school and what they study; training programs are often built around the stated needs of local businesses; arts programs are dependent on the cultural tastes of sponsors. This study recognizes that these and other forms of power relations exist within transnational communities but rejects the notion that these relationships exclusively condition educational and cultural processes.

In the period covered by this study, it is clear that US educational and cultural models and philosophies became more influential throughout Latin America. In the Colombian case, changes in national political leadership together with an emerging bipartisan consensus for education reform brought an end to constitutionally sanctioned Church authority over the national education system. This represented a radical departure from tradition, and it brought the elite monopoly over national educational resources to an end. But, as politicians, economic interests, and developing middle and professional

classes turned to education as a vehicle for national modernization, the limited educational infrastructure of the nation was ill prepared to accommodate rapid change and increased demand. In this context, foreign educational resources were welcomed and encouraged by Colombians as never before. As Europe was first fighting and then recovering from a debilitating war, US educational models proved especially available, accessible and adaptable for meeting needs in the rapidly diversifying educational environment.

In Colombia, national and regional educational bureaucracies, private and public schools, and national business interests strongly encouraged US educational and cultural influences. Additionally, Colombian intellectuals, artists, students and parents embraced US cultural resources as the nation pursued basic literacy, cultural reforms, access to higher education (in-country and abroad), routes toward professionalization and wider career opportunities. Significantly, flexible US programs and resources stood in stark contrast to the existing European-modeled and Church-controlled national education system that offered limited options for Colombians below the upper class. Equating European and Catholic educational models with elitism of the past and US approaches with modernity, many Colombians came to appreciate the value US culture placed on public education, and many sought to emulate it; though inequities within the US system were acknowledged and criticized (with noteworthy attention to racial discrimination), Colombians at all levels welcomed US influence as they constructed more modern and inclusive educational and cultural infrastructure.

It is, however, a mistake to see the increased US influence in Colombia as constituting cultural imperialism or cultural dominance. This study reveals that

Colombians established educational contacts with US educational institutions, solicited US resources to meet local needs, and turned to US models as alternatives to existing educational and cultural programs. Via such resources, US influences spread among some educational and cultural communities, over some national education policies, and among some individuals in Colombia. But this influence was neither static nor uncontested, and it often dissipated as it evolved over time. In the middle decades of the twentieth century, Colombians, and not Washington policymakers, reformed their national education system and reframed national culture using all of the local, regional, national and transnational resources available to them.

Limited attention to mass media and higher education aside, US-sponsored education and cultural programs in Latin America and the transnational communities they spawned have received insignificant attention from scholars outside the field of education. Historians have acknowledged US-sponsored education programs in Latin America as an important component of Washington's program of cultural diplomacy, but few have studied these programs on the ground. Owing to this lack of attention, charges that US-sponsored projects facilitated cultural imperialism or cultural domination have yet to be adequately critiqued. US cultural programming in Latin America and the transnational educational and cultural communities it fostered are important cultural sites of inter-American contact. When these and other cultural sites are overlooked in scholarship, our understanding of Latin American-US relations remains framed by political economy. We fail to recognize the spread of US cultural influence in the region as a response to local realities. We fail to recognize the significant Colombian role in building the infrastructure of US educational and cultural influence.

Chapter One

Pan American Education

Simón Bolívar, like so many wealthy South Americans of his and subsequent generations, received an education abroad. Born in Caracas, the future Liberator of Caribbean and Andean lands studied in Spain as a teenager, traveled through Napoleonic Europe, and visited the independent United States during its (and his) early and formative years. He returned to his homeland with definite ideas about governance and independence, and he eventually led a protracted military campaign that resulted in the expulsion of Spain from many of its American colonies.

Under Bolívar, the Republic of Colombia was formed in 1819 as a political union of the newly independent territories in the northwest corner of the South American continent. Known to history as *Gran Colombia*, to differentiate it from the smaller and later emerging nation of Colombia, the short-lived political union included Venezuela, *Nueva Granda* (today's Colombia including Panama) and Ecuador. In an age of changing but still threatening European imperial ambitions, Bolívar inspired and championed Pan American unity as a powerful deterrent to external threats from Spain, Europe and elsewhere. Elected as the republic's first president, he served two consecutive terms from 1819-1830.

When it came to the practicalities of governing, Pan American inspiration alone could not sustain union in the wide and diverse territory of *Gran Colombia*. As Bolívar continued campaigns of liberation in Peru and Bolivia further to the south in the Andes, his dreams and the rhetoric of unity crumbled in the young nation to the north. When the hero of independence returned to actively assume his position in the national capital at

Bogotá, the challenges were overwhelming. Tensions between the advocates of a strong and centralized national government and the proponents of regional autonomy through federalism prevented consensus and coalescence around a unified national project. Desperate to provide the new country with stability, Bolívar turned to heavy handed and dictatorial measures that enraged his political opponents and led to assassination attempts. When Venezuela withdrew from the union in 1830 and Ecuador soon followed, Bolívar's Pan American dream met its demise. Conscious of his failings and suffering poor health, Bolívar resigned his leadership. He left the Andean highlands for the Caribbean coast to await passage to exile in Europe. A fallen hero, Bolívar died at Santa Marta on the Colombian coast shortly thereafter. He was financially and politically ruined.¹

Despite his sad and unfortunate demise, time quickly elevated Bolívar to a high pedestal that few South American heroes have occupied. Statues of Bolívar are common on central plazas throughout the region; countries, cities, currency, schools and universities bear his name; and his political failures are hardly considered in romanticized histories of national and continental liberation. Though his experiment with Pan American union proved illusory, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Panama have historically embraced their Bolivarian roots and regularly employ the Liberator's rhetoric to minimize regional and cross border controversies that have come with modernity. In this and other ways, Bolívar's Pan American dream has proven easily adaptable and readily available to the modern world.

¹ Simón Bolívar is legend in Latin America and treatments of the "Liberator" reflect and contribute to the Bolivarian cult. See for example: John J. Johnson and Doris M. Ladd, *Simón Bolívar and Spanish American Independence, 1783-1830* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1968); J.L. Salcedo-Bastardo and Annella McDermott, *A Continent and Its Destiny* (Richmond, England: Richmond Publishing Co., 1977); Luis B. Prieto and James D. Parsons, *Simón Bolívar: Educator* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970).

This dissertation considers not Bolívar's Pan American dream of 1830 but a new version of Pan Americanism that framed inter-American relations a century later. The new Pan Americanism of the 1930s was a political philosophy that grounded a hemispheric campaign aimed at preventing the spread of radicalism and warfare from Europe to the Americas. Borrowing from Bolívar and identifying with his unifying image, this new political philosophy regarded regional unity as crucial to the long-term stability of Latin America. Adapting Bolívar's approach to the modern world, the new Pan Americanism emphasized not unified nationhood but international cooperation among existing nation-states. Alarmed by the potential influence in Latin America of the variant forms of fascism then developing in Spain, Portugal, Germany and Italy, Washington policymakers championed this approach as the best deterrent to conflict in the hemisphere. Cautiously encouraged by governments and influential elements throughout Latin America as well, the new Pan Americanism was fundamental to the climate of cooperation that characterized Latin American-US relations during the global economic crisis of the 1930s, in the build up to war in Europe, and for the duration of World War II.

The transnational educational and cultural projects examined in this study grew out of this new Pan Americanism, and this first chapter provides crucial historical context for exploring foreign/local encounters that occurred where Colombian and US education systems, philosophies and resources converged. It begins with an overview of the new Pan Americanism as organized from Washington in the 1930s. Focused on fostering cooperation within the hemisphere, Washington initiated and funded activities aimed at increasing "mutual understanding" among the peoples of the Americas. The Office of the

Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, a war-time agency, was charged with developing the Pan American project, and this section details its organization, leadership and approach. Because education was the privileged arena for much of the new programming, the balance of the chapter considers educational realities that conditioned Colombian-US collaboration. It historicizes the limited scope of the Colombian educational system, the role of politicians and the Catholic Church in maintaining elite exclusivity in Colombian classrooms, and reforms of the 1930s that promoted modernization, expansion and secularization of the system. For comparison, the chapter then considers the remarkable growth in US schooling during the first half of the twentieth century and the growing appeal of US educational models for Colombians. While state and local efforts drove growth in the US system, by the late 1930s the federal government was carving out a role for itself in defining educational modernity for the nation. While the constitutional barriers to federal control over domestic education were significant, Washington found new channels for asserting US educational authority abroad.

The New Pan Americanism of the 1930s

In his first inaugural address in 1932, Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) called for better and more respectful relations between the United States and its hemispheric neighbors, and he soon asked his staff to propose “some practical means to express the good-neighbor policy.”² In a series of subsequent hemispheric meetings at Montevideo in 1933, Buenos Aires in 1936 and Lima in 1938, the Roosevelt administration joined with the nations of the Americas to change the dynamics of inter-American relations.

Sponsoring or seconding a series of cooperative agreements ranging from commercial

² “White House Statement on Conference of American States in Montevideo, Uruguay,” 9 Nov. 1933, in Franklin D. Roosevelt and Douglas Lurton, *Roosevelt’s Foreign Policy 1933-1940: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Unedited Speeches and Messages* (New York: Wilfred Funck, Inc., 1942), p. 28.

planning to educational exchange to pledges of mutual defense, the US State Department made hemispheric solidarity the fundamental aim of the Good Neighbor policy. To achieve this goal, the department initially focused on economic stability. Confronting continuing economic crisis at home and abroad and concerned about the approaching European war (as well as conflicts in the Far East, Spain, and Palestine), the department saw long-term stabilization of the regional economy as essential for social peace and stable governance. Thus, negotiation of reciprocal trade agreements with the Latin American republics became the first order of the day. As these negotiations occupied the department's time in the years before Europe went to war, they brought new attention to a region Washington had long taken for granted. Through these negotiations, the Foreign Service bureaucracy gained a deeper understanding of Latin American economies and markets. At the same time, they developed broader knowledge of Latin American society in general and began to engage more comfortably in new forms of diplomacy.

The goal of broad hemispheric solidarity had roots in an earlier Pan American movement that emerged at the close of the 19th century under US leadership. At that time a representative body, the Pan American Union (PAU), was established to address regional issues and promote greater understanding and cooperation among the peoples of the Americas. Centered in Washington, the PAU's primary objective was fostering a sense of Pan American identity to facilitate better hemispheric relations. Importantly, as the PAU worked to bridge the divided between the Americas, it also attempted to dismantle barriers to cooperation between Latin American countries themselves.³

³ The International Union of American Republics was established in 1890, and US Secretary of State James G. Blaine was the leading proponent of the organization. It was subsequently renamed the Union of American Republics. By 1910, it had been renamed the Pan American Union (PAU). After the establishment of the Organization of American States at Bogotá in 1948, the PAU was absorbed into the

Historically, Latin American nations were suspicious not only of the US but of each other; even as they celebrated shared Latin American cultural identity, they were disinclined toward regional political and economic cooperation. Though this internal Latin American dynamic was a serious obstacle toward PAU objectives, interventionist US foreign policy presented the greatest challenge to hemispheric understanding and cooperation.

In the first three decades of the twentieth century, the US established a strong military presence in the Caribbean and Central America. As it added various Latin American parcels to its national territory and exercised temporary military and economic control over others, the US was rightly seen as an imperialist power. The Panama Canal Zone, a ten-mile wide strip across sovereign Panama, became US national territory. Puerto Rico became a US possession after the Spanish American War. The US military occupied Cuba and US politicians inserted the Platt Amendment, which explicitly sanctioned the right of the US to intervene in Cuban affairs, into the island's constitution. And multiple interventions in Mexico, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Honduras were carried out in the name of US economic interests and regional stability. Because the US was the region's preeminent military and economic power, its interventionist activities in the first third of the twentieth century gave its hemispheric neighbors reason to question the sincerity of the US-led Pan Americanism of the PAU.

new body. Historical analysis of the PAU is surprisingly sparse though the organization is frequently referenced in scholarship. For basic overview of the organization and its founding see: Clifford B. Casey, "The Creation and Development of the Pan American Union," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 13, no. 4 (November 1933), pp.437-456; Gilderhus, *The Second Century: US-Latin American Relations Since 1889*; Gilderhus, *Pan American Visions: Woodrow Wilson in the Western Hemisphere, 1913-1921* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1986); Walter Scott Penfield, "The Legal Status of the Pan American Union," *The American Journal of International Law* 20, no. 2 (April 1926), pp. 257-262. The publications of the PAU were numerous. *The Bulletin of the Pan American Union* was published in the principal languages of the hemisphere and is widely available to scholars. The proceedings of the various hemispheric conferences sponsored by the PAU are also available.

Though willing to engage in cooperative programs in the areas of science, education and culture, the countries of the hemisphere understood that regional power did not rest within the PAU. Thus, this early twentieth-century Pan Americanism enjoyed only limited credibility among Latin Americans, and it was barely acknowledged in the US. Among select scientists, intellectuals, and academics, however, Pan Americanism was beginning to gain professional currency. Transnational educational and cultural communities were emerging.

US foreign policy shifts in the 1930s gave the Pan Americanism promoted by the PAU a new lease on life. While US tariffs reforms, cooperation in the sciences, and educational exchanges helped to improve Latin American-US relations in some professional and business communities, FDR's explicit rejection of military intervention strategies, more than anything else, contributed to the new climate of cooperation in the hemisphere. At the PAU conference at Montevideo in 1933, the US signed Article 8 of a hemispheric "Convention of Rights and Duties" which unequivocally rejected intervention by one nation against another. The next year after the Cuban government had unilaterally abrogated the Platt Amendment, Washington did the same.⁴ With the formal reversal of its long-standing interventionist policy and new diplomatic attention to the region, the US immediately gained political leverage with its Latin America neighbors. As World War II approached, goodwill generated by FDR's Good Neighbor initiatives cleared the path toward greater solidarity in the Americas. While historians debate the motivations behind and the achievements of the Good Neighbor initiatives, it is clear that

⁴ After Cuba abrogated the Platt Amendment and the US followed suit an unconditional rejection of intervention in the hemisphere came in a resolution at the Buenos Aires Convention of 1936. Thomas G. Patterson, *Contesting Castro: The United States and the Triumph of the Cuban Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 5; Espinosa, *The Inter-American Beginnings of U.S. Cultural Diplomacy, 1938-1948*, p. 69.

many Latin American governments recognized and appreciated the shift in US policy during FDR's presidency. Though it remained to be seen how long the non-interventionist politics would sustain, at least temporarily cooperative programs and a discourse of mutual respect replaced coercion and military force as the tools of US foreign policy in the region.⁵

The PAU and its predecessor organization, the International Bureau of American Republics, had held more than a half dozen regular conferences and various special topic meetings between its founding in 1889 and the late 1920s. In the quest for modernity that marked the early twentieth century, science, technology, culture and education were frequent topics addressed at these gatherings, and exchanges involving scientists and academics were a common result. Representatives from Washington always attended and forwarded agendas at these conferences, but private philanthropic and professional organizations from the US played more important roles. Given the US tradition of deferring to private initiative and limiting government activity, organizations such as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Institute of International Education, and the American Council on Education played crucial roles in funding, administering and promoting the transnational cultural contacts established at the conferences. While most of the developing contacts occurred in the realm of elite academia and never the left the

⁵ During and immediately after the war, traditional or consensus historiography viewed the Good Neighbor Policy uncritically as a tremendous success. See Bemis, *The Latin American Policy of the United States*. In future generations, many who took a more complicated analytical approach still viewed the Good Neighbor Policy favorably. See Irwin F. Gellman, *Good Neighbor Diplomacy: United States Policies in Latin America, 1933-1945* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979). However, much of the revisionist historiography that appeared after mid-century was more suspicious of good neighborly intent and more critical of the policy's outcomes. Typically, revisionists framed the Good Neighbor Policy as a tool of US economic interests. They focused on the continuing US expansion into Latin America and the dominance of hemispheric markets that resulted. For a broad historiographical overview of post-war revisionist scholarship see Gilderhus, "An Emerging Synthesis? U.S.-Latin American Relations since the Second World War," *Diplomatic History* 16 (Summer 1992), pp. 429-452.

institutional level, the work of the PAU and US private organizations laid an important base for the official US cultural diplomacy that would later emerge.⁶

In the field of education, PAU activity was wide-ranging. Identifying language as a serious barrier to cultural understanding, the PAU consistently used conferences to encourage the teaching of the Spanish in US schools and the teaching of English in Latin American schools. This practice would later be taken up as a recommendation in the formal plans of US cultural diplomacy.⁷ At Havana in 1930, a special inter-American gathering of “Rectors, Deans, and Educators in General” met to follow up on education resolutions passed at an earlier PAU conference. As a result of that conference, the Inter-American Institute of Intellectual Cooperation was created within the PAU and government-sponsored exchanges of university students and professors ensued.⁸ When the PAU met at Buenos Aires in 1936, collaborative education activities were further expanded with the signing of the Convention for the Promotion of Inter-American Cultural Relations. Additional cultural conventions were approved that covered exchanges of government and academic publications, inter-American tours of national art collections, and the circulation of educational films.⁹

Washington’s renewed interest in Pan Americanism initially resulted from FDR’s friendlier policies in the hemisphere. Owing to the budget constraints of the era and the sense that interventions complicated rather than solved problems, the president took a

⁶ Espinosa, *The Inter-American Beginnings of U.S. Cultural Diplomacy, 1938-1948*, pp. 14-25.

⁷ Pan American Scientific Congress, *Proceeding of the Second Pan American Scientific Congress* (Washington: USG Printing Office, 1917), pp. 561-563.

⁸ Espinosa, *The Inter-American Beginnings of U.S. Cultural Diplomacy, 1938-1948*, pp. 25, 70. Reflecting the US government preference for private over public funded activities, the US objected to language in the official resolutions passed at Montevideo (which supported the recommendations of the earlier conference at Havana) that required national governments to fund such exchanges. While accepting the obligation to support and administer such exchanges, the US delegation succeeded in having the language change to allow private organizations to fund such activities.

⁹ Espinosa, *The Inter-American Beginnings of U.S. Cultural Diplomacy, 1938-1948*, p. 84.

friendlier approach which respected the sovereignty of American states. As the 1930s progressed, however, intensifying US interest in Pan Americanism became a function of its fears over Latin American vulnerability to anti-democratic forces. Well before the outbreak of war across the Atlantic, Washington displayed tremendous concern that Latin American nations were being used as sources of raw materials by aggressive and potentially hostile European nations. In addition, US leaders continually sounded the alarm that radical influences from abroad --at this stage fascism was the primary concern-- were penetrating the region. Justifying the growing expense of its new diplomacy to a skeptical Congress and asserting a notion of shared inter-American culture in the late 1930s, the State Department framed budget requests against a fear that “foreign countries are inculcating ideas totally alien to the Americas.”¹⁰

A sense that Axis influence in Latin America had increased through sustained and well-funded German, Italian, and Japanese economic and cultural campaigns spurred development of more activist and cooperative diplomacy by the United States. While the activities of the Axis powers were of immediate concern and singularly fueled the successful drive in Congress toward the funding of similar US programs, it was simultaneously recognized that many friendly countries had also gained influence in Latin America through economic and cultural programs. Chief among them were Britain and France. Schools, clubs, libraries, and cultural centers sponsored by European nations in Latin America suddenly concerned the State Department. Academic exchanges between European and Latin American universities along with official European educational and technical missions to various nations of the region were equally

¹⁰ Lawrence Duggan, testimony, House Subcommittee on Appropriations, *Department of State Appropriation Bill for FY 1939 - HR9544*, 75th Cong., 3rd sess., 6 December 1937, p. 37.

disconcerting. In economic areas, the Department of State found that many development projects in Latin American countries had been dependent on European experts for years. That European countries, especially Germany, had provided technical experts at no charge to the requesting Latin American countries provided justification for initiating a similar US program at no cost.¹¹

Rather suddenly, Washington became determined to offer an alternative to European cultural influence and present its own models of modernity to its southern neighbors. Having already committed to establishing formal government cultural relations with the region at the 1936 Buenos Aires conference, the US began to create organizational infrastructure to carry it out. Formulating a philosophy to guide cultural diplomacy, “mutual understanding” among the peoples of the Americas was identified as the essential ideal to be cultivated. Such understanding, policymakers reasoned, would be achieved not through propaganda campaigns and one-sided promotion of US culture but through reciprocal cultural exchange and open dialogue. From these encounters, it was hoped that Americans throughout the hemisphere would grow more tolerant and appreciative of their differences and, just as importantly, discover their common interests and shared culture. To the extent that a broad formulation of Pan American identity could be cultivated and propagated, Washington believed hemispheric unity would be strengthened. Justifying the nascent cultural approach to diplomacy and the administration’s requests for sizeable increases in appropriations for Latin American cultural programs, Secretary of State Cordell Hull told Congress:

In a political sense, it is wise to have friends close at hand...In a general sense, we feel that in these troubled times in the world it is a real advantage to have

¹¹ House Subcommittee on Appropriations, *Second Deficiency Appropriation Bill for FY 1940 - HR10104*, 76th Cong., 3rd sess., 30 June 1940, p.69.

*friends near at home of similar outlook and purpose with whom we can cooperate and who will cooperate with us in time of need. The work is extending rapidly because of these new friendships, particularly in fields with which heretofore the Department has had very little to do.*¹²

To implement the terms of cooperative agreements signed by the United States and various American republics at Montevideo, Buenos Aires, and Lima, FDR had established the Interdepartmental Committee on Cooperation with the American Republics in May 1938. This committee grew out of the Committee of Inter-American Affairs that had earlier been formed by the president within his cabinet. Reflecting the expanding scope of US attention to Latin America, the interdepartmental committee included representatives of thirteen federal departments and agencies who were involved in formulating and implementing initiatives for the region. Congress approved legislation authorizing special funds for the committee the following year based on a report proposing seventy-four interdepartmental projects of hemispheric cooperation. Included in the document were educational programs proposed by the US Office of Education and the State Department that aimed to increase “mutual understanding” among the people of the hemisphere.¹³

The State Department, which had oversight and organizational responsibilities for all of the interdepartmental initiatives, followed the lead of the PAU and privileged education and cultural exchange as key arenas for Latin American programming. That education had an especially crucial role to play in new programs was signaled from the top. FDR himself called for an increased role for education in American foreign policy. Addressing the National Education Association in 1938, the president referred to the

¹² Cordell Hull, testimony, *HR9544*, 6 December 1937, p. 1-2.

¹³ Inter-Departmental Committee on Cooperation with the American Republics, *Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Cooperation with the American Republics*, Report #508 (Washington: USG Printing Office, 1938)

alarming situation in Europe and framed fascist policies as a war against education and culture. The US and its allies, he argued, needed to take up the cause:

when the clock of civilization can be turned back by burning libraries, by exiling scientists, artists, musicians, writers, and teachers, by dispersing universities, and by censoring news and literature and art, an added burden is placed upon those countries where the torch of free thought and free learning still burn bright.¹⁴

In 1938, the Department of State formally established a Cultural Relations Program specifically for Latin America. The new cultural program complemented existing Good Neighbor programs in the areas of commerce, educational interchange and social development, and it aimed to foster Pan American unity while building resistance to antidemocratic and radical forces. Promoting a more positive image of the United States in Latin America was an important and related goal. With the outbreak of hostilities in Europe in 1939, US diplomatic programs in Latin American accelerated and became more explicitly tied to the war. Development of hemispheric unity through “mutual understanding” remained the goal, but programs were now targeted more precisely at countering the economic penetration, propaganda campaigns, and expanding cultural influence of the Axis powers.

The Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs

As war took over Europe, it was common perception in Washington that the Nazi plan for world domination involved organizing a “fifth column” of supporters in the Americas. Such a column, it was thought, would facilitate Axis occupation of Latin America and provide a launching pad for their attacks on the US. German nationals in the

¹⁴ Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Address to the National Education Association,” 30 June 3 1938, in Roosevelt and Lurton, *Roosevelt’s Foreign Policy 1933-1940: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Unedited Speeches and Messages*, p. 142.

hemisphere along with Latin American nationals of German, Italian, and Japanese descent were expected to make up the core of the column. That such immigrant communities were plentiful in the region was grounds for much US concern. As war demanded greater attention and resources of the State Department, coordination of the government's increasing Latin American activities became taxing. Responsibility for programming soon shifted to a new agency, the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OIAA). While the State Department resisted the control of the OIAA over Latin American programs, as a practical matter it needed the assistance of the new agency to both maintain and increase programs in the hemisphere.¹⁵

The Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs was founded in August 1940 and served as a war agency until its closure in May 1946. During its six-year existence, it employed approximately 1000 employees in addition to the personnel of its five subsidiary corporations and the twenty volunteer committees of US citizens (called "Coordination Committees") in Latin America. Thirty-two year old Nelson A. Rockefeller was appointed by FDR as the coordinator of the new agency. Though the US tradition of limited government and deference to private initiative had been replaced by more activist governance in the 1930s, the administration still hoped business, philanthropic, and professional organizations would continued to play a leading role in new US programs in the hemisphere. Well connected to the most powerful actors in US

¹⁵ The name of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs was subsequently changed to the Office of Inter-American Affairs. Historical studies abbreviate the name of the agency in a variety of ways. This study uses OIAA which is the designation used by the National Archives and Records Administration. For a discussion of the OIAA-State Department relationship from the perspective of the OIAA, see chapter 15 - "Relations of OIAA with the Department of State" in Donald W. Rowland, *History of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs: Historical Reports on War Administration* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1947), pp. 181-194.

business, cultural and philanthropic communities, young Rockefeller proved a solid choice to lead the OIAA. He answered directly to the president.

Rockefeller's family name and his connections to the petroleum industry would later provide fuel for revisionist historians, who saw only economic and strategic motivations in the Pan Americanism of the Good Neighbor and World War II years. But, to frame Rockefeller strictly as an economic and government operative is to miss a prime example of complexities that typify Latin American-US encounters. Rockefeller had worked in Venezuela, had traveled extensively in Latin America, and was enthusiastic about the region's history, culture and languages. He was a humanitarian who believed not simply in philanthropic donations but in personal philanthropic activism and empowering individuals. As Darlene Rivas has shown in her analysis of Rockefeller's activities in Venezuela, he embodied the tensions of modernity: he preached faith in free enterprise but had reservations about corporate power; he believed strongly in US leadership but recognized its potential abuses; he believed in the freedom of the individual but was equally concerned with community welfare. Based on his experiences in Latin America, Rockefeller brought to the OIAA a belief in "missionary capitalism." He believed that capitalism needed be reformed so as to be more conscientious, respectful of the individual, and supportive of the common good.¹⁶

Under Rockefeller, OIAA leadership was "drawn from the business world" and offered a wide-range of expertise.¹⁷ The OIAA's programs were varied and changed throughout the war, but they were generally grouped within one of several organizational divisions: Commerce/Economics, Transportation, Information (radio, motion pictures,

¹⁶ Darlene Rivas, *Missionary Capitalist: Nelson Rockefeller in Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), pp. 209-216.

¹⁷ OIAA, *History of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs*, p. 181.

publications, and press), Health/Sanitation, Food Supply/Nutrition, and Culture. As a war agency, the OIAA was officially empowered to address matters of an immediate nature. Yet in practice Rockefeller the “missionary capitalist” was more ambitious. Under his leadership the OIAA was “as much interested in long-range projects looking toward improvement in conditions in the hemisphere as they were in those concerned with the war effort.”¹⁸

At its establishment, the OIAA’s most immediate concern was a new economic crisis in the region. The war cut Latin America off from many of its crucial European markets. The US government initiated programs by which it purchased large quantities of raw materials to alleviate the problems of supply. The US benefited from such purchases and also avoided economic chaos in the region by preventing inroads by Axis agitators. Additionally, the OIAA immediately took an active role in developing and implementing new cultural programs to counter Axis influence. OIAA organizational committees of art, music, literature, publications, education and cultural interchange were formed. Intensifying exchange programs that had been running since the late 1930s, the OIAA arranged for year-long interchanges of leaders in education, literature, law, medicine, music, and arts between the United States and Latin America. It also offered travel grants for shorter visits to students, teachers, and experts in various fields. OIAA leaders hoped that all Latin American travel grantees would report positively about the United States once they returned home. They believed positive public testimonies about life in the US would soften lingering views of the US as an imperialist power and counter anti-US propaganda perpetuated by Axis powers and their local supporters.¹⁹

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 2.

Extending cultural programming into the region, the OIAA developed mass media campaigns to “educate” Latin Americans about the war and US-led mutual defense preparations for the hemisphere. But film, radio, and print media campaigns also focused more broadly on inter-American education, health, and cultural topics that continued to emphasize Pan American identity. And by the early 1940s, the OIAA also began to fund libraries, US cultural centers, and existing schools founded by US nationals in the region.²⁰ The OIAA viewed these institutions, grounded in local Latin American communities, as the most effective means of fostering “mutual understanding” and building long-term support for the United States and the principles of democracy.

In the spirit of the Good Neighbor policy, the developing program of cultural relations was reciprocal. Informed by a sense that hemispheric solidarity and understanding required that United States citizens be educated too, Rockefeller asserted that the “lack of understanding is the basic problem we have in this field and I think inability to speak each other’s language has been one of the great contributing factors in that.”²¹ Rockefeller’s personal experiences in Latin America informed his explicit belief that US citizens were wholly ignorant about Latin American culture, and he prioritized a US-based program of education about Latin America.²² The responsibility for domestic inter-American programs was shared between the OIAA and the US Office of Education (which was part of the Federal Security Agency during war). One major program promoted the teaching of Spanish and Portuguese in US public schools. Others focused on developing the teaching of Latin American history and culture in US universities and

²⁰ US Department of State, *The Program of the Department of State in Cultural Relations*, Publication 1702, Inter-American Series 21 (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1942), p. 1.

²¹ Nelson Rockefeller, testimony, House Subcommittee on Appropriations, *Hearings of Department of State Appropriation Bill for FY 1943 - HR6599*, 77th Cong., 2nd sess., 30 January 1942, p. 449.

²² Rowland, *History of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs: Historical Reports on War Administration*, p. 105.

schools and circulating teaching materials, traveling exhibits, and books about Latin America. In addition, informative pamphlets, art exhibits, music, film and radio programming were targeted at the general population.²³

Overall, governments throughout the region proved very receptive to the efforts of Rockefeller and the OIAA. While remaining suspicious of US power, in the volatile global climate of the day many agreed that “mutual understanding” was a necessary first step toward better relations along the hemisphere’s north-south axis. And they welcomed the opportunity to reshape the inter-American relationship. However, accompanying Latin America’s general willingness to engage in new economic, political, and cultural relationships with the US was a more skeptical reception to the notion of Pan American identity. Some Latin Americans embraced the inclusive hemispheric identity proffered by Washington, yet many others resisted the label. Their reasons varied.

First, the cultivation of broad hemispheric identity faced the road blocks of nationalism and anti-imperialism. Since the late nineteenth century, anti-US imperialism had proven an important fountain of nationalist sentiment in Latin America. In Colombia, where resentment of the US role in Panamanian independence always lingered and was easily stoked, denunciation of US power and influence was a dependable tool for rallying public opinion around domestic campaigns. Second, those who resisted US-sponsored Pan Americanism often advocated for building cooperative Latin American identity in its stead. Political realists, like Colombia’s Eduardo Caballero Calderon, understood that US influence would likely intensify after the war and saw the strengthening of Latin American identity as the solution; distinguishing Bolívar’s Pan Americanism from Washington’s version, he argued that there was no “Pan Americanism possible or

²³ John Patterson (Director of the Office of Education), testimony, *HR6599*, 24 January 1942, pp. 308-312.

desirable if Latin-Americanism does not exist first.”²⁴ Without Latin Americanism, he and many others believed Pan Americanism would facilitate US dominance. Third, Pan American identity collided with *Hispanidad*, a very potent force in Latin American identity politics. *Hispanidad* took many forms but in general it manifest as a celebration of those Latin American cultural traditions which were rooted in Spain. The essential elements of *Hispanidad* were Roman Catholicism and the Spanish language, but all of the socio-cultural structures with which religion and language overlapped were elements as well. For many Latin Americans, *Hispanidad* summarized the cultural essence of their nations and served as the primary unifying cultural force in the region. In reaction to Liberal secularism, the embrace of *Hispanidad* was particularly pronounced among Conservative intellectuals and politicians in Colombia from the late 1880s forward. During the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s, the victors had fought under a banner of *Hispanidad* and prescribed it as the antidote to the secular evils of modernity. Ardent supporters of the Spanish movement were prominent in Colombia and throughout Latin America, and their rhetoric further challenged the US assertions of hemispheric identity.²⁵

Individually and combined, variant forms of nationalism, anti-imperialism, Latin Americanism, and *Hispanidad* grounded individuals’ rejection of Pan Americanism. Yet to see Pan American identity simply as a fabricated and politically expedient construct

²⁴ Eduardo Caballero Calderón, *Latinoamérica: un mundo por hacer* (Bogotá: Editorial Minerva, 1944), p. 52.

²⁵ Bushnell, *The Making of Modern Colombia*, pp. 191-192; Palacios, *Between Legitimacy and Violence*, pp. 102, 148; Bailey W. Diffie, “The Ideology of *Hispanidad*,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 23, no. 3 (August 1943), pp. 457-482; “*Hispanidad* v. Pan America,” *Time*, 26 April 1943, p. 34; Alfonso Junco, “Carta de un católico mejicano a un católico norteamericano,” *Revista Javeriana* 15, no. 74 (May 1941), pp. 210-211; “Editorial: Los Enemigos de la Buena Vecinidad,” *El Pueblo* (Medellín), 2 March 1943, p. 4; Gabriel Henao Mejía, “El Debate de la *Hispanidad*,” *Universidad Católica Bolivariana* 6, no. 19-20 (February-May 1941), p. 409-411.

imposed from Washington is to oversimplify complex hemispheric identity politics. As this study will demonstrate, there were many Latin Americans who embraced Pan American identity. For them, nationalism, Latin Americanism, and Hispanidad did not automatically conflict with broad and inclusive hemispheric identity. Differences would always exist between the Americas, but efforts to understand difference and acknowledge commonalities provided a strong basis for establishing shared identity.

Speaking to the secondary school students of Barranquilla on Pan American Day in 1942, for example, industrialist and intellectual Ramón Emiliano Vélez offered pointed criticism of past US foreign policy. Recounting that the Monroe Doctrine had promised “solidarity and protection” to Latin America, he reminded the audience that military imperialism had been the result. Given past abuses, he warned that Colombia and Latin America needed to remain on guard against future US interventions. Yet, he simultaneously signaled optimism about new trends in Latin American-US relations. Vélez was most enthusiastic that educational and cultural exchange was at the center of the new philosophy. Equating the new Pan Americanism with Bolívar’s ideal, he framed it as worthy of celebration and encouraged students to participate in its construction.²⁶

The collaborative Colombian-US education and cultural programs examined in this study demonstrate that many Colombians willingly engaged in constructing the new Pan Americanism and did not reject Pan American identity. For some modernists, it was a pragmatic decision. Pan Americanism presented the option of symbolically linking their less developed nation with the modern and powerful US. Hopeful that the benefits of modernity would flow with cooperation and cautiously optimistic about the US commitment to “mutual understanding,” these modernizers saw concrete benefits to the

²⁶ Ramón Emiliano Veléz, “El Día de Las Américas,” *Mejoras* 7, no. 68 (April 1942), pp. 14-16.

new Pan Americanism. At the same time, the embrace of broad American identity allowed Colombians to differentiate their nation and national culture from its elite European roots. As warfare gripped Europe, advocates of Pan Americanism continually drew a contrast between the new, democratic and peaceful America and the violent, traditional, and old mother continent.

The National Education System in Colombia

Church Authority, European Influence, and Elite Exclusivity

Until the mid-twentieth century, education in Colombia was largely in the hands of the Catholic Church and structured around a tiny, elite fraction of the national population. Battles over secularization were a major political theme through the nineteenth-century and pitted Liberals against a Conservative-Church alliance. When Liberals periodically held control of their government in the decades after independence, their efforts at educational reform were often limited to the opening of philosophically Liberal secondary schools to provide elite families with a secular educational option for their sons. More radical secularization efforts were initiated with Liberal reforms in the 1870s when broader Church privileges and power came under heavier assault. At that time, Liberal rhetoric decried the “ideological and economic” domination of church over the nation. Yet then as earlier, Liberals didn’t have resources or the manpower at their disposal to convert a Catholic education system to a secular one. Though they gained support in their efforts toward secular education from artisans in urban centers and, overall, increased enrollments slightly, they did not have the resources to push their ideologies of reform in the rural areas.²⁷

²⁷ Aline Helg, *La educación en Colombia: 1918-1957, una historia social, económica y política*, trans. Jorge Orlando Meló and Fernando Gómez (Bogotá: Plaza & Janés, 2001), p. 17-33.

For their efforts to expand and secularize education, Liberals would be branded anti-clerical and earn the wrath of the Church. Like almost all Colombians, however, most Liberals were Catholic. Though some anti-clericalism was evident among individual party leaders and followers, demands for education reform and expansion were not a Liberal assault on religious faith. Most Liberals accepted a role for the Church in religious “indoctrination” of children, and few questioned the appropriateness of teaching Catholic doctrine in the schools. Instead, they opposed Church influence over pedagogy.²⁸ Liberal support for secularization of education reflected beliefs in the principles of republican governance rather than an attack on religion. They well understood that the Church was a “common denominator” in a nation marred by repeated outbreaks of civil warfare, and contrary to Church and Conservative rhetoric, they were interested in reining in and not eliminating the nation’s “only institution capable of bringing cohesion to the disjointed society.”²⁹

During Conservative political rule from the 1880s through 1930, a period called the Conservative Hegemony, a campaign was initiated to reverse what the Church perceived as a strong current of secularization in Colombian society. Reversal started at the top. Under a new constitution, Roman Catholicism was acknowledged as the religion of the nation and was formerly recognized as an “essential element of the social order.” To give meaning to constitutional phrases, a separately negotiated concordat between Bogotá and the Vatican was signed in 1887 to clarify the role of the Church in society. Reacting to secularization in Europe with activist diplomacy, the Vatican secured from Colombian Conservatives the concession that education in the nation would be

²⁸ Palacios, *Between Legitimacy and Violence*, pp. 48-92.

²⁹ Helg, *La educación en Colombia*, p. 27.

“organized and directed” in accordance with Catholicism. To ensure that teaching would be in “conformity with” Catholic doctrine, the concordat gave the national Church hierarchy control over textbook choices and right to officially denounce and pursue expulsion of teachers.³⁰ Later, when the Conservative government took steps to increase the number of schools, Church approval became a legal requirement for new primary and secondary establishments.³¹ In effect, with the consent of ruling Conservatives, the Church exercised constitutionally-sanctioned hegemony over the national education system through the first third of the twentieth century.

At the turn of the nineteenth century in the midst of a brutal civil war, Colombia’s illiteracy rate stood at 66%.³² As the war ended, Conservatives working within the parameters of the concordat took steps to expand and improved educational programming as a means of modernizing and unifying the nation. They created a Ministry of Public Instruction to lead the necessary reforms, and by the early 1920s, the ministry was exerting greater control over secondary education. Schools licensed to grant the *bachillerato* certificate, a diploma required for university study, had to conform to a standardized national curriculum established by the government and approved by the Church.

Through the 1920s, Conservative campaigns to expand education barely achieved modest gains. When Liberals assumed control of the government in the early 1930s, ending nearly fifty years of Conservative rule, only 30% of Colombian children of

³⁰ “Concordato entre la Santa Sede y la República de Colombia, 31 diciembre de 1887,” reprinted in *Conferencias Episcopales de Colombia, Tomo I* (Bogotá: Editorial de Catolicismo, 1956).

³¹ Ministerio de Educación Nacional, *Disposiciones vigentes sobre instrucción pública de 1927 a 1933* (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1933), pp. 221-225; Ministerio de Educación Nacional, *Instrucción pública: disposiciones vigentes* (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1927), pp. 133-137.

³² Rosemary Thorp, *Progress, Poverty and Expulsion: An Economic History of Latin America in the 20th Century* (Baltimore: Inter-American Development Bank, 1998), appendix.

appropriate age were enrolled in a primary school.³³ The majority of those enrolled attended for only for a year or two and never completed the program. Just 12% of those enrolled in rural primary schools reached the final or third year. In urban schools, which had a six year program, less than 2% of enrollees reached that final year. Enrollment figures at the secondary level were even more sobering. Of the total who attended primary school, less than 7% completed the program and moved onto the secondary level.³⁴ Illiteracy rates in Colombia directly reflected the limited reach of education, and as new school reform efforts were debated in the 1930s, approximately six in ten Colombians over ten years of age could still neither read nor write. Even with this high illiteracy rate Colombia was better off than some of its regional neighbors, yet for elites who judged national progress against European standards, the limits of literacy were increasingly seen as an obstacle to modernity.³⁵

In the first three decades of the twentieth century, responsibility for primary education rested not with the national government but with the departments. Males and females, who were educated separately, had approximately equal representation in primary school populations though female enrollment was higher in rural areas and lower in urban centers. Secondary-level schools or *colegios* were the responsibility of the national government, but only 25% of the *colegios* in Colombia were government-run schools and many that carried the official designation were administered privately. In granting educational authority to the Church, Conservatives had relied upon it to build and run secondary-level *colegios*. Unlike primary schools, Colombian *colegios* served

³³ Helg, *La educación en Colombia*, p. 70.

³⁴ Helg, *La educación en Colombia*, p. 49.

³⁵ “Distribución de los habitantes, por secciones del país, según la instrucción,” Cuadro 51, *Censo General de Población: 5 de Julio de 1938, tomo XVI, Resumen general del país* (Bogotá: Contraloría General de la República, 1942), p. 127.

elite and upper-class families. Levels of enrollment were slightly higher for males than females, though higher percentages of females were educated in private schools and males significantly outnumbered females in government or official schools. In colegios, males received a classical education based on European models and university preparation was the primary goal. By decree, the government established a standard national curriculum, but until the 1920s colegios had complete freedom to establish course priorities. Coursework included: Spanish, Latin, French, and, to a lesser extent, English; rhetoric, philosophy, and Catholic religion; mathematics and physics; geography and history.³⁶ In contrast, females at the colegio level received a moral and religious education infused with class and gender-appropriate training for household responsibilities.³⁷

In the first third of the twentieth century, colegios could be divided into four categories. First, Catholic schools, run by the national Church or Catholic religious orders, represented more than 50% of all colegios. They catered to a slightly higher percentage of girls than boys, and many were founded and staffed by members of religious congregations of European, and especially French, origin. Owing to the dominance of French friars and nuns in these schools, they offered an education that was “classic and literary” but in many cases culturally French.³⁸ The second most popular type of colegio was a lay [*laico*] institution run by Colombians, some of whom had left religious life. Such schools were Catholic in orientation and were most frequently found in urban centers where Church colegios could not meet enrollment demands. These lay

³⁶ Helg, *La educación en Colombia*, pp. 70-74.

³⁷ Teresa de la Inmaculada, *Quien ha educado la mujer colombiana?* (Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 1960); Helg, *La educación en Colombia*, pp. 84-86.

³⁸ Helg, *La educación en Colombia*, p. 81.

institutions accounted for close to 40% of all colegios. Third, a small group of colegios were founded by Liberals as an alternative to Catholic education. These schools often stressed scientific over classical and religious education and were frequent targets of political attacks by the Church hierarchy and their Conservative supporters. Lastly, a small but growing number of colegios were founded and staffed by foreigners, mostly German and British nationals, and modeled on their own national curricula. They usually served local children of resident foreigners but also appealed to upper-class families who wanted an alternative to the French and Catholic influence within Colombian schools.³⁹

Strong transnational currents have historically circulated within Colombian education, and colegios founded by foreigners contributed to such currents. However, it is crucial to recognize that the greatest source of foreign influence on the nation's education system came from Europe via the Vatican. The Vatican's veto power over educational programming gave international Catholicism and its European cultural traditions strong influence in the nation's schools. More significantly, the concordat of the late nineteenth century between the Vatican and ruling Conservatives effectively opened Colombia's classrooms to direct European influence in the form of teachers. The document allowed European religious congregations, which were then being displaced from classrooms of the Old World by the forces of secularization, to immigrate freely to Colombia and establish new schools. Providing the Vatican with a solution for its displaced congregations and offering Colombia a means to expand educational services, the concordat facilitated the arrival of over forty religious communities by 1930. The majority arrived from France, but German, Italian, and Spanish congregations arrived as

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 74-75.

well.⁴⁰ Some of these congregations took up educational work in the national territories where the central state lacked a presence. They established schools in indigenous communities and among other marginalized populations on the periphery of the nation. However, most of the new congregations remained in the urban centers of the Andean interior, and following Colombian tradition, established colegios that served the upper class. In Bogotá in 1891, soon after the new influx of European religious had begun, 40% of the friars and 20% of nuns in the city were foreigners, and most were members of French orders. In urban areas outside the capital and particularly in less-cosmopolitan regional capitals, European friars and nuns had an even more dominant presence in schools. Through the 1920s, their presence increased.⁴¹

Because so many elite Colombians were educated by foreigners, schools were important sites of foreign/local encounters. In Colombian classrooms, students came into close contact with European cultures and languages. With a preponderance of educators from France, emphasis on the study of the French language, and high numbers of French-Spanish bilingual schools, it is hardly surprising that so many wealthy Colombians developed cultural affinity for France. Strong French influence was reflected in elite art, fashion, and music. The works of French writers and philosophers filled the personal libraries of upper-class families. Colombian writers printed their books in Paris. And when they sent their sons to study in the universities of Europe, Colombians showed a

⁴⁰ *Anuario de la Iglesia católica en Colombia* (Bogotá: Editorial el Catolicismo, 1938), pp. 193-310; Helg, *La educación en Colombia*, pp. 74-76.

⁴¹ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society*, pp. 246-247. The influx of European Catholic orders in the late nineteenth century is detailed and celebrated in Jesús María Fernández and Rafael Granados, *Obra civilizadora de la Iglesia en Colombia* (Bogotá: Librería Voluntad, 1936). The annual *Memorias* published by the Ministry of National Education and the *Anuario de la Iglesia católica en Colombia* (1938) document the influx as well. For insight on European influences on education in Medellín, see Patricia Londoño-Vega, *Religion, Culture and Society in Colombia: Medellín and Antioquia, 1850-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

preference for France and French-speaking regions. Italian, British, Belgian, and German educational influences, while less pronounced, also marked European influence on Colombian culture.⁴²

Given the limited reach of Colombia's education system and the strong European cultural influence in elite colegios, it is clear that "educational institutions deepened the cultural chasm between the elites and the masses."⁴³ Elite constructions of Colombianidad reflected shared experiences in national classrooms led by Europeans, university study in European capitals, and travels to and from the Old Continent. In a largely illiterate nation, elites held a monopoly on the projections of national identity via books, newspapers, and magazines. And resulting in part from foreign-influenced educations, such projections carried many references and symbols whose meanings were lost on the Colombian majority.

At the level of pedagogy, a secular alternative to Colombia's Catholic educational model was offered by German educational theorists who had growing influence among some Colombian educators. German philosophies framed education scientifically and proffered systematic approaches to learning and teacher training. German graduate programs in education and other disciplines were popular with Europeans and North Americans by the late 1800s. Colombians, too, were interested in German educational models, and reformers in both parties contracted German pedagogical missions in the

⁴² Laureano García Ortiz, "Las Viejas librerías de Bogotá," *Boletín de Historia y Antigüedades* 33, no. 385 (November 1946), pp. 765-788; Jonathan C. Brown, "The Genteel Tradition of Nineteenth Century Colombian Culture," *The Americas* 36, no. 4 (April 1980), pp. 445-464; Luis Eduardo Nieto Arteta, *Economía y cultura en la historia de Colombia* (Bogotá: 1962); Renán Silva, *República Liberal, intelectuales y cultura popular* (Medellín: La Carreta Editores, 2005); Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society*, pp. 246-24. In the nineteenth century, a small segment of the elite enrolled their sons in technical and scientific programs at US universities. See Frank Safford, "In Search of the Practical: Colombian Students in Foreign Lands, 1845-1890," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 52, no. 2 (May 1972), pp. 230-249.

⁴³ Palacios, *Between Legitimacy and Violence*, p. 77.

1870s and in the 1920s. The forging of a unified German state from distinct regions in the second half of the nineteenth century had impressed Colombian politicians whose own nation suffered regional fragmentation. For Colombian observers, the German education system offered a model for facilitating national cohesion among divided peoples.⁴⁴

Germany offered a model of modernity that appealed to Colombian elites of the younger generations. Its extensive public school system was directed by the state, coordinated with national economic planning, and charged with fostering German identity among the children of the nation. That the unified German state soon purchased a third of Colombia's major exports was also instrumental in shifting some elite attention toward that European nation.⁴⁵ Predictably, both of the German education missions to Colombia became bogged down in the divisive partisanship and Church politics that characterized education policy debates in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Yet German recommendations helped to define educational discourse as the nation pursued modernity. Particularly important in the 1920s was the German mission's strong insistence that parental obligation for the education of children should be established in the law. Of course, the nation did not have the infrastructure and the national elite then lacked the will to educate all Colombian children, but this recommendation helped frame debates over compulsory education that drove Liberal educational reforms in the 1930s.⁴⁶

The 1930s: Secularization, Modernization and Cultural Change

The return of the liberals in 1930 brought new energies to educational reform and initiated the formal decline of Church hegemony over educational and cultural affairs.

⁴⁴ Jaime Jaramillo Uribe, "La Escuela Normal y la mision alemana," in *Manual de historia de Colombia*, Tomo III, ed. Jaime Jaramillo Uribe (Bogotá: Procultura, 1982), pp. 271-272; Peter Novik, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 21-24.

⁴⁵ Aline Helg, *La educación en Colombia*, p. 25.

⁴⁶ Palacios, *Between Legitimacy and Violence: A History of Colombia, 1875-2002*, p. 78.

Reflecting growing bipartisan consensus that the existing educational infrastructure would not support modernity, the elite privileged education as a vehicle for developing and integrating the national economy, addressing social instability, and legitimizing central-state authority. In a sharp departure from tradition, elites across party proved willing to support a broad extension of educational services to historically less-favored classes. Shared faith in the transformative power of education grounded this building consensus, but serious disagreement remained over the best methods for achieving reform.⁴⁷

Educational reform had to respond to the dynamics of urbanization. In Colombia, as across the hemisphere, cities were on the rise and urban agendas were increasingly driving national development. Over the course of the century, as the nation grew from four to forty-two million people, urban populations increased from less than a fifth to almost three quarters of the national total. As urbanization changed a predominantly rural and agricultural country into a “nation of cities,” the combined impact of industrialization and tremendous expansion of the urban service sector made Colombia less rural and its economy less agricultural. Indeed, while agriculture dominated the Colombian economy for the first half of century, it accounted for less than 20% of GDP at century’s end.⁴⁸ Efforts to reform education and expand educational services had to respond to the new urban reality.

Alfonso López Pumarejo, who was elected to the presidency in 1934, initiated the Revolution on the March [*La Revolución en Marcha*]. Often compared with the New Deal, López’s revolution radically shifted debates in national politics by emphasizing

⁴⁷ Jaramillo Uribe, “Las reformas liberales,” pp. 285-289.

⁴⁸ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society*, pp. 301-307.

social and labor issues.⁴⁹ Like the New Deal it was a moderate program that aimed for economic and social stability and was decidedly not revolutionary. López expanded government management of the economy, courted the middle class, embraced organized labor, and initiated a limited program of agrarian reform. Ending literacy requirements for suffrage, he broadly opened the political process. Historiography concludes that the immediate achievements of the Revolution on the March were modest at best, yet the long-term impact of the López reforms was far from marginal. Reflecting building bipartisan consensus for addressing obstacles to modernity, *La Revolución en Marcha* made the nation “truly face up for the first time to its social question.”⁵⁰ In doing so, it broke with governing traditions and forever altered Colombian politics.

In educational affairs, López sharply turned up the heat in the century-old secularization debate. When he identified the Church as the primary obstacle to educational reform and modernization, hope for bipartisanship in education policy hit a wall. López concentrated on asserting state control over education and launched a direct assault on the hegemony of the Church. With a constitutional amendment in 1936, he eliminated the requirement that education be “organized and directed” in line with Catholic teaching. At the same time, primary education was made free and obligatory although no provisions were made for funding the expansions required to meet the new obligation. The Church and most Conservatives adamantly, yet unsuccessfully, fought

⁴⁹ Assessments of *La Revolución en Marcha* and the first López administration vary, and the literature is deep. Influential interpretations are found in: Daniel Pécaut, *Política y sindicalismo en Colombia* (Bogotá: La Carreta, 1973); Daniel Pécaut, *Orden y Violencia: Colombia 1930-1954* (Bogotá: CEREC, 1987); Bernardo Tovar Zambrano, “La intervención económica del estado en Colombia, 1914-1936” (Bogotá: Biblioteca Banco Popular, 1984); Alvaro Tirado Mejía, *Aspectos políticos del primer gobierno de Alfonso López Pumarejo, 1934-1938* (Bogotá: Procultura, 1981); Richard Stoller, “Alfonso López Pumarejo and Liberal Radicalism in 1930s Colombia,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 27, no. 2 (May 1995), pp. 367-397.

⁵⁰ Bushnell, *The Making of Modern Colombia*, p. 191.

these constitutional changes. Opposing obligatory education, the Church asserted that the decision to educate a child rested with the head of the family, the father. It also mounted strong resistance to a ruling that permitted admission of students who were illegitimate by birth to primary, secondary, and professional schools. Denial of admission based on other social, racial, or religious distinctions was also prohibited. Beyond the reduction in Church control and establishment of state supremacy in educational affairs, the López education reform policies had multiple other objectives: implementing sound economic policies to allow for proper budgeting for education and social programs; improving quality of life for the nation's impoverished, rural majority through literacy and schooling; establishing adult education programs; nationalizing the system of teacher training; beginning a nationwide school construction program; funding school cafeterias to provide meals for poor students; and reforming the National University and building a centralized campus. Most controversial was the effort to establish and enforce state inspections of private schools because it brought secular authority into Catholic classrooms.⁵¹

Loss of its constitutional privilege in the 1930s weakened Church authority, but it remained a powerful force in education. Still educating the majority of Colombian secondary students, it used the power of the pulpit to denounce Liberal education reforms. Condemnations of parents who sent their children to secular schools were frequent and threats of excommunication were not uncommon.⁵² As “the longstanding competition between Liberals and the church to train new members of the cultural and

⁵¹ Ricardo Arias, “Estado laico y catolicismo integral en Colombia: La reforma religiosa de López Pumarejo,” *Historia Crítica*, no. 19 (2000); Christopher Abel, *Política, Iglesia y partidos en Colombia, 1886-1953* (Bogotá: FAES, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1987); Jaramillo Uribe, “Las reformas liberales,” pp. 285-289; Helg, *La educación en Colombia*, p. 148.

⁵² Helg, *La educación en Colombia*, p. 145.

power elite” continued under new political conditions, new Catholic universities were opened in urban centers to increase Church influence and counter Liberalism in the public universities.⁵³ At the same time, the middle class became the new target group of both Liberals and the Church in their battle to define and direct modernity. This growing class had much to gain if Liberal reforms could be fully implemented. Historically, post-primary schooling options had been limited as the Church, Conservatives, and Liberals themselves privileged the educational demands of the elite. Educational options were also changing for women as a discourse of gender and modernity developed and informed reform efforts at the primary and secondary levels. Sex segregation remained virtually absolute in secondary schools, but opposition to curricula based on traditional gender-roles grew louder. And the gendered structures of education were radically altered when López opened Colombian universities to women for the first time in 1935.

For all its grand plans to transform society through education reform, very little change in levels of schooling occurred during López’s first term. At the end of the 1930s, only slight increases in enrollments had been achieved and two-thirds of Colombian children still did not attend school.⁵⁴ Yet, the supremacy of the central state had been asserted and the Church had been constitutionally stripped of its official role in education. Colombia “was beginning to adapt to modern currents,” and while Vatican and Catholic European influences on the system remained strong, they faced increasing competition from alternative local, regional, and transnational educational and cultural outlets.⁵⁵

Importantly, the López administration paired education reforms with a campaign to promote Colombian culture and national identity. In the eyes of Liberal leaders, it was

⁵³ Palacios, *Between Legitimacy and Violence*, p. 109.

⁵⁴ “Analfabetismo urbano y rural,” Cuadro 65, *Censo General de Población: 5 de Julio de 1938*, p. 128.

⁵⁵ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society*, p. 287.

essential to get the Colombian people, who were scattered across geographically disjointed and culturally distinct regions, to think as a nation. Historically, they were more likely to identify with region than nation, and the lack of national consciousness made it difficult to build broad popular support for a reform agenda. Traditionally Colombianidad had been constructed and projected from within elite Andean and literate culture, and it was far from representative of the lived experience of most in the nation. As a building block for national unity, its value was minimal. The weakness of the central state, bitter partisan politics and the nation's long history of civil warfare had also worked against the development of Colombianidad as a unifying force. So, too, had lack of schools which could have taught national history and geography or introduced national symbols to young and impressionable generations. Thus, in order to develop national consciousness, Liberals began to construct and project more inclusive frames of Colombianidad. Educational expansion facilitated this process, but cultural programming was not limited to classrooms. On public plazas in rural villages and urban barrios, government programs presented music, dance and theatrical performances that celebrated the nation.⁵⁶

Implementing its educational and cultural projects, Liberals engaged the new technologies of communication. Emerging mass media offered the government powerful new tools for promoting its modernization projects and for legitimizing its authority. Radio and film were especially important to educational reforms, and both were used extensively in non-traditional programming to bring services to individuals and communities outside the reach of formal educational infrastructure. These technologies

⁵⁶ Catalina Muñoz, "To Colombianize Colombia: Cultural Politics, Modernization and Nationalism in Colombia, 1930-1946" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2009), pp. 56-68. See also Silva, *República Liberal, intelectuales y cultura popular*.

proved especially useful in rural zones. Though urbanization was rapidly changing rural/urban demographics, 71% of Colombians still lived in rural areas through the 1930s.⁵⁷ That a sizeable education gap differentiated the countryside from the more educated cities was evidenced by a 30% differential in literacy rates between zones.⁵⁸ In their quest for modernity, Liberals developed rural programs to reach both children and adults; they prioritized programs to improve literacy rates and foster national culture in those zones. Lacking the infrastructure and resources to establish schools on a wide scale, they employed mass media. Radio programming, educational film, and new literacy materials arrived in rural areas via radio receivers and traveling schools [*escolares ambulantes*] operated out of trucks. Government presentations of folkloric dancers, musical groups, and film celebrating national culture were also important in rural educational outreach.⁵⁹

Significantly, while government harnessed new mass media channels for its modernization projects, the same technology was increasingly available to others for disseminating alternative cultural, political and commercial ideas and images. Aided by rising literacy rates, new professional groups, education communities, labor unions and non-elite political organizations were gaining influence within Colombian society by using mass media channels to participate in national discourse. In this process, the elites in and out of government and the national Catholic Church lost their traditional power to filter and authenticate Colombianidad. Proliferating mass media channels allowed non-elite voices to project their own cultures and challenge both the traditional elite and the

⁵⁷ “Población urbana y rural del país,” Cuadro 16, *Censo General de Población: 5 de Julio de 1938*, p. 39.

⁵⁸ “Analfabetismo urbano y rural,” Cuadro 65, *Censo General de Población: 5 de Julio de 1938*, p. 128; “Magnitud del analfabetismo en la zona urbana del país, por sexos (en referencia a los grupos respectivos urbanos),” Cuadro 66, p. 131.

⁵⁹ Muñoz, “To Colombianize Colombia”; Silva, *República Liberal, intelectuales y cultura popular*; Aline Helg, *La educación en Colombia*, p. 153.

newly emerging Liberal frames of Colombianidad. As Marco Palacios explains, within the Andean core and on the national periphery “new cultural meanings emerged, new beliefs and even ways of expressing feelings, which broke the prevailing Catholic rigidity.” Rapidly, the “hegemony of the elitist culture of letters, both religious and secular, went up in smoke.”⁶⁰ Simultaneously, the national government was forced, like never before, to respond to the political demands of non-elites in marginalized regions. Greater competition for national resources ensued as the political process contended with mobilizations of electorates and interest groups that were facilitated by mass media. In the commercial sphere, the marketing of goods and services via new media channels also began to have an impact; changing patterns of consumptions fostered new consumer cultures and further altered traditions.

Searching for Models and Resources

Viewed from the field of education, Colombia experienced an explosion in educational programming and infrastructure from mid-century forward. As the national education system was reformed and expanded by successive administrations from both parties, participation in primary and secondary schooling increased significantly and illiteracy rates dropped exponentially. Vocational and business programs provided new training and employment possibilities for workers. New post-secondary options --more universities, new academic disciplines within universities, and flexible short-term professionalization and technical courses-- gave students and their families more career choices. Many remained outside the practical reach of education and educational reforms,

⁶⁰ Palacios, *Between Legitimacy and Violence*, p. 236-237. For a broader view of this change see also Peralta, *Distinctions and Exclusions: Looking for Cultural Change in Bogotá during the Liberal Republics, 1930-1946*.

but many others were able to take advantage of the new educational offerings. This was particularly true for the small but growing urban middle and professional classes.

While government reform efforts initiated by López in the 1930s were fundamental to the subsequent growth in Colombia's national education system, it is a mistake to see only official state efforts behind such growth. Rather, both public and private initiatives drove reform and expansion. Visions of modernity and educational reform were not the exclusive province of elites and the national government they controlled. Among others, the rising middle classes, new urban economic sectors, and emerging professional groups formulated their own visions of modernity. Assessing their own educational needs and searching for resources to address them, they placed demands on existing educational infrastructure, on their national and regional governments, and on the private sector. And following a pattern that was well established in Colombia education, they also looked abroad for the resources and models that could meet their needs.

As alternatives to elite visions of modernity circulated widely at the start of the 1940s, Colombians across class began to engage with US educational and cultural models and resources. Such engagement had traditionally been muted by elite preferences for European culture, but the new focus on modernity had laid bare the deficiencies of Colombia's European-Catholic education system. As hemispheric collaboration accelerated in the build up to world war, education became an important theme in Colombian-US relations not only because FDR and his administration placed it at the center of their Pan American initiatives but because reform of education was a priority for Colombians across class and region.

The US Education System: Expansion and Change before Mid-Century

In the turn-of-the century US, the national education systems was extensive at the primary level but had less depth at the secondary level and beyond. Study at the university level was largely restricted to the upper classes. Driven in part by the social reforms promoted by the Progressive Movement in the first decades of the century, secondary and vocational education programming began an expansion that would rapidly bring post-primary options to communities throughout the country. As secondary education enrollments increased, university and college programs grew dramatically. With new departments, programs, and institutions, the US university system began to attract more US students to graduate study. A decline in the number of US citizens pursuing graduate studies in Europe (especially Germany) resulted from the greater availability of programs at home. Latin Americans, too, began to respond to increased graduate and undergraduate programs in the US. Some of the new movement of students from Latin America to the US resulted from PAU exchange activities and growing economic relations between the two Americas.⁶¹ Yet, a substantial boom in Latin American enrollments in US universities did not occur until Washington established cultural diplomacy in the region.

Significantly, growth in US education in the first half of the twentieth century also coincided with the emergence of new educational theories promoted by John Dewey. Dewey led a movement against traditional education and its emphasis on rote learning. Encouraging a progressive and child-centered approach to education, he argued that school curriculum and classroom practice should be relevant to the lives of the children. Education had to respond to the times. It had to recognize the modernity of the present.

⁶¹ Espinosa, *The Inter-American Beginnings of U.S. Cultural Diplomacy, 1938-1948*, p. 42.

Dewey proposed professionalization of teaching and the adaptation of educational services to urban and rural realities.⁶² Importantly, by the second decade of the twentieth century, Latin American educators and policymakers were increasingly aware of John Dewey and US educational philosophy and models.⁶³

Over the decades covered by this study, US educational philosophy and models developed as important influences on Colombian education. The US system differed greatly from its Colombian counterpart, but in the midst of the global economic crisis of the 1930s reformers in both countries were similarly concerned with engaging the transformative power of education to modernize and unify their nations, foster social stability, address the challenges of urbanization and rural life, and promote economic growth. As both national governments claimed greater roles in the education of their citizenry, dynamics of regionalism and race were also critical themes. Examining the transnational educational communities that formed around US-sponsored education programs in Colombia, this study reveals the complex cultural encounters that unfolded as Colombian and US educational systems and reform efforts converged in local communities. To contextualize this convergence, overviews of US education in the first half of the twentieth century and contemporary educational activism by the federal government conclude the present chapter.

The High School Movement

While Washington has always taken interest in the schooling of its citizens, the responsibility for education rests with the states because the US Constitution denies the federal government a directing role. As such, states have historically maintained

⁶² Martin S. Dworkin, "John Dewey a Centennial Review," in *Dewey on Education: Selections* (New York: Teacher College Press, 1959), pp. 1-18.

⁶³ Helg, *La educación en Colombia*, p. 25.

independent school systems for the benefit of their citizens. Still, even though it was prohibited from establishing a national educational system, the federal government had nonetheless always been involved in some areas of education. It played an influential role in the founding of most state educational systems; as the nation expanded to the West, territorial governments' plans for education were important considerations in applications to Congress for statehood. It also had a historical role in running schools in federal territories that were outside the jurisdiction of any state. For example, it established, funded and maintained a school system (based on a Southern US race-segregated model) in the Panama Canal Zone. And the fact that the schools of the District of Columbia were under federal control made the US government responsible for a larger school system than many states. Additionally, by the early twentieth century, the federal government had begun to assert greater influence over the educational affairs of the nation through grants tied to specific federal education projects or objectives. Such was the case when aid to state-based vocational education programs was initiated in 1917.

The US system of free public education had historic roots in New England of the seventeenth century, but the concept of the free public education (at the elementary or primary level) was only gradually enshrined as a tenet of US democracy. Strong public interest in "Americanizing" the millions of immigrants who arrived in the US during the nineteenth century played an important role. Free public schooling ensured faster cultural assimilation of immigrant children than would have otherwise been possible and offered a path to national unity. By the early twentieth century, each state provided elementary schools for the education of their citizens and required attendance of all children.

Secondary schooling, by comparison, did not become part of mainstream public education until later.⁶⁴

At the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, just 18% of age-appropriate students attended secondary schools in the US, and only about half of the attendees earned a graduation diploma. Low enrollment and participation rates, however, rapidly increased as the “High School Movement” emerged.⁶⁵ Local advocates of secondary education reform and expansion throughout the US led this movement which succeeded in raising aggregate enrollment in public and private high schools to 73% by 1940. Graduation rates increased from 9% to 51% in the same period. As Claudia Golden explains, this “rate of increase was nothing short of spectacular and the levels attained were unequaled by any country until much later in the century.”⁶⁶ By comparison, in Europe, contemporary efforts to expand secondary education and graduation rates were less successful before mid-century. Increases came at a significantly slower pace than in the US. While the US adapted high schools to the needs of non-college bound students, most European secondary systems were slower to do so. They continued to privilege

⁶⁴ Jonathan C. Messerli, *Horace Mann: A Biography* (New York: Knopf, 1972); Jonathan C. Messerli, “Localism and State Control in Horace Mann’s Reform of the Common School,” *American Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1965), pp. 104-118; Clyde S. King, “Horace Mann’s Influence on South American Libraries,” *History of Education Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (December 1961), pp. 16-26; Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The Metropolitan Experiment, 1876-1980* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988); David B. Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974); William J. Reese, *The Origins of the American High School* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

⁶⁵ Claudia Golden, “America’s Graduation from High School: The Evolution and Spread of Secondary Schooling in the Twentieth Century,” *The Journal of Economic History* 58, no. 2 (June 1998), pp. 345-374. See also Edward A. Krug, *The Shaping of the American High School: Volume 2, 1920-1941* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972); William J. Reese, *The Origins of the American High School*.

⁶⁶ Golden, “America’s Graduation from High School,” p. 347.

university preparation.⁶⁷ This difference helps to explain the increasing attractiveness of the US models and philosophies to Latin American educators and reformers.

Reflecting the reality of local control over schooling, the High School Movement was driven by grassroots efforts in 125,000 autonomous districts around the country. The movement empowered local communities to craft their own visions of modernity and negotiate social balances with the forces of urbanization, industrialization, and technological change. And while many state governments and professional organizations, like the National Education Association, encouraged this movement, the federal government had “practically no part in the story of expansion.”⁶⁸

Before its remarkable growth spurt, the primary function of US secondary schools was preparation for college. As such, and as was the case in Colombia, secondary schooling was largely the privilege of the elite. But the High School Movement extended post-primary educational resources to the working and lower classes and “transformed secondary schools from preparatory institutions to schools that awarded terminal degrees to the vast majority.”⁶⁹ Whereas approximately half of all high school graduates went to college in 1910, by 1933 only 25% of graduates did so. High schools continued to offer college-preparatory programs for the increasing aggregate numbers of college bound students, but they also introduced new options for students interested in a terminal diploma. The classical or the Latin-scientific scientific curriculum had been the standard college-preparatory program throughout the nation before this change. In addition to English, math, history, and science, it emphasized the study of classical Latin and Greek

⁶⁷ Claudia Golden and Lawrence F. Katz, “The Legacy of U.S. Educational Leadership: Notes on Distribution and Economic Growth in the 20th Century,” *The American Economic Review* 91, no. 2 (May 2001), pp. 18-23.

⁶⁸ Golden, “America’s Graduation from High School,” p. 351.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 352.

and modern French and German. As more and more non-college-bound students entered high schools, the “English curriculum” emerged as the most popular alternative. Study of Greek language and classics was eliminated and Latin was reduced to an optional language choice. French became the most studied foreign language, and as German decreased in popularity during and after World War I, Spanish garnered more interest.⁷⁰ The introduction of vocational, technical, and business courses as electives or complete high school programs evidenced the ability of locally-based educational systems to adapt to community needs.⁷¹ Of course, as segregation in schools of the US South demonstrates, such a decentralized system also allowed community prejudices to be structured into the system.

High graduation rates fell just before World War II and continued their decline during the war. That so many teenage boys went to war and some teenage girls went to work in war industries explains this decline. After the war, graduation rates recovered and continued to rise. The GI Bill, which paid for the college educations of many returning soldiers and is credited with spurring the mid-century boom in post-secondary education, also provided returnees with financial assistance for the completion of high school. From a regional perspective, the Southern states that maintained segregated schools for whites and blacks were slower to join the expansion of secondary education; there, graduation rates for both races were far behind the rising national averages.⁷² With regard to gender divisions, the trend in US public high schools was toward coeducation, but private schools, and especially Catholic ones, were more likely to maintain gender-segregation in their classrooms. Overall, female graduation rates before and during the

⁷⁰ Espinosa, *The Inter-American Beginnings of U.S. Cultural Diplomacy, 1938-1948*, p. 47.

⁷¹ Krug, *The Shaping of the American High School: Volume 2, 1920-1940*.

⁷² Golden, “America’s Graduation from High School,” pp. 361-363.

High School Movement were higher than male rates in every region. As a practical matter, a high school diploma allowed girls to qualify for more modern, respectable, and comfortable office jobs and by-pass less desirable factory labor.⁷³

Federal Government Activism in Education

The global economic crisis of the 1930s shifted the traditional federal-state relationship within education. Because education was most often funded locally through property taxes, the “fortunes of education” began to “rise and fall with the ability and willingness of real estate owners to pay taxes.”⁷⁴ As the Depression introduced economic crisis to communities around the country, the educational growth of the previous three decades was threatened, and school closures at all levels were common. Defining the Depression as a national crisis, FDR initiated new educational activism to address the developing problems. Under New Deal liberalism the federal-state relationship with regard to education began to shift. As FDR’s Advisory Committee on Education would later point out, “for the first time, there was implied recognition of a Federal obligation to maintain at least a low minimum of educational opportunities throughout the Nation, and thus to relieve the strain of the acute local financial distress.”⁷⁵ Importantly, as the federal government became more directly engaged with education in the states and asserted new authority in the field, it would also begin to actively project US educational philosophies and resources abroad.

Calls for increased federal aid to education were not new in the 1930s. Indeed, formal advisory committees appointed by Presidents Warren Harding and Herbert

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Advisory Committee on Education, *The Report of the Committee: February 1938* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1938), p. 19.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 36.

Hoover made such recommendations in the 1920s, but they were ineffective in making the case to Congress.⁷⁶ In 1936, FDR appointed his own advisory committee to specifically review federally funded vocational programs. A year later, when there were various education reforms bills before Congress, Roosevelt asked his committee to expand their scope and consider the broad relationship between federal and state governments in educational matters.⁷⁷ The president's request had the important impact of slowing a variety of educational finance bills, which were at the time moving through Congress. Until the findings of FDR's Advisory Committee on Education were reported, legislators agreed to extend deference to the president.

Each of the several bills that were then moving through Congress would have altered the federal-state relationship with regard to education. Testimony at congressional hearings for the bills, by professional educators and advocates of increased federal aid, reveals a high level of concern for the preservation of state control over education. Yet the basic notion that "a citizen of one of the sovereign States is none-the-less a citizen of the Nation" underscored testimony.⁷⁸ Overall, hearings emphasized the difficulties brought on by the Depression, the inequality of education from state to state and, particularly, the injustice of low quality Negro education.

When the Advisory Committee on Education released its report in 1938 it naively asserted that "the American people are committed to the principle that all of the children of this country, regardless of economic status, race, or place of residence, are entitled to an equitable opportunity to obtain a suitable education, so far as it can be provided in the

⁷⁶ George F. Zook, testimony, Senate Subcommittee on Education and Labor, *Hearings on Senate Bill S1305*, 76th Cong., 1st sess., 2 March 1939, p. 83.

⁷⁷ Lloyd E. Blauch and William L Iverson, *Education of Children on Federal Reservations: Staff Study Number 17* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1938), p. iii.

⁷⁸ Howard A. Dawson, testimony, Senate Committee on Education and Labor, *Hearing on Senate Bill S419*, 75th Cong., 1st sess., 9 February 1937, p. 17.

public schools.”⁷⁹ In forwarding a program of expansive federal aid and federal participation in the education of its citizens, the committee recognized the need to maintain the delicate constitutional balance between the states and the federal government. Popular fear of “centralized schools” was a concern committee members openly acknowledged, yet they demanded more active leadership from Washington.⁸⁰

Calling for excellent schools with provisions for vocational training, strong teaching staffs, modern and safe facilities, plentiful instructional materials, and part-time adult education programs, the report made the case for a huge federal expenditure of \$855,500,000 over six years. Funds would be distributed as grants for a variety of programs; local schools would receive support through grants to their states; funds for teacher training and school district reorganizations would be made available; vocational education grants to schools would continue; adult education programs (3.6 million American adults had not finish elementary school and 3 million more were illiterate) would be created; a library service for rural communities would be initiated; and educational research grants would be offered to institutions of higher learning through the Office of Education.⁸¹ Clearly, the program was ambitious. And the enormous expense concerned one member of the committee, who could not recommend “the expenditure of a large sum of money for education when the greatest present need of the majority of the supposed beneficiaries is bread.” He favored a more modest program.⁸²

While the committee found that local, Depression era funding problems had begun to wane by the second half of the decade, the majority saw no reason to abandon

⁷⁹ Advisory Committee on Education, *The Report of the Committee: February 1938*, p. 4.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁸¹ Advisory Committee on Education, *The Federal Government and Education* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1938), pp. 18-27.

⁸² Advisory Committee on Education, *The Report of the Committee: February 1938*, p. 222.

the drive for greater federal involvement in education. Indeed, as the economic forecast for the country improved, the committee encouraged federal leadership to seize the opportunity to correct the problems of inequality that plagued American education. “In most cases the worst injuries of the depression have been repaired, and there is general disposition to build anew a sounder foundation.”⁸³ Of particular concern to the committee was the education of black Americans:

*All the statistics for length of school term, average attendance, educational qualifications of teachers, type of school buildings, and other factors indicate that a wasteful neglect is characteristic of the treatment of Negro school children in most of the areas where they are required to attend separate schools.*⁸⁴

While conscious that the issue of race had serious potential to sidetrack any legislation resulting from their report, the committee insisted that distribution of aid to states with separate Negro schools undergo greater scrutiny than would be required in non-segregationist states. Grants to segregationist states, they argued, “should be conditioned upon an equitable distribution of Federal funds between facilities for the two races.”⁸⁵ The committee was specifically concerned that states would reduce expenditures on Negro schools in portion to the amount such schools were funded by the federal government.

Calls for greater federal involvement in national education programs increased just as the government was developing Pan American programming around educational collaboration. With education emerging as an important focus for both domestic and foreign policy, Washington developed new connections to educational communities at home and abroad and began to exert greater influence over them. Significantly,

⁸³ Ibid., p. 7.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 11.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 43.

acknowledgement of a federal obligation toward US children living abroad grew out of the legislative debates initiated by the presidential advisory committee. Of particular importance was the recognition by the federal government of an obligation to educate US children living on “federal reservations.” New Deal employment and modernization projects had moved large numbers of workers and their families onto federal lands across the country. In 1937, an estimated 20,000 students were living on more than 300 federally controlled “reservations” from dam sites to lighthouses to army posts to national parks and forests. Local school districts within the states were expected to educate the workers’ children, but without the benefit of property tax contributions many of these districts experienced financial emergencies. While FDR authorized provisions for schools on certain large projects (the Tennessee Valley Authority projects, for example), his administration grossly overlooked the education of children on most federal lands. As the National Education Association pointed out: “for some, Congress makes excellent provisions; for some, the use of Federal funds is authorized; while for others, absolutely no provision is made by the Federal Government.”⁸⁶

The problems of educating US children abroad were, for the first time, officially detailed and addressed by the 1938 report. As part of the discussion of education on federal reservations, the committee recommended funding for schools that served US children at “foreign stations” (diplomatic and consular missions abroad).⁸⁷ Angry parents at both foreign stations and federal reservations claimed “that the Federal government was avoiding an obligation that it should assume,” and recommended that Congress

⁸⁶ Howard A. Dawson, *Memorandum on Educational Facilities for Children on Federal Government Reservations*, in Senate Committee on Education and Labor, *Hearings on Senate Bill 251*, 75th Cong., 1st sess., 9 February 1937, p. 2.

⁸⁷ Advisory Committee on Education, *The Report of the Committee: February 1938*, p. 162.

“establish a permanent policy by which all children of Federal employees on Federal Reservations or at foreign stations will be assured the right to an education.”⁸⁸

Children living at foreign stations (excluding for those living in the Panama Canal Zone and at major military posts where school systems had already been established by Congress) were estimated to make up about 10% of the total number of children living on federal reservations. And while they were in number less significant than the children living on federal reservations within the continental United States, their problems were no less significant: “Federal personnel, when sent to a foreign post where school facilities are inadequate, face a school problem of a characteristic somewhat different from that found on reservations, but perhaps fully as serious.”⁸⁹

In 1937, approximately 38,000 Federal employees were stationed outside the continental United States. The majority lived in US territories and possessions (“outlying areas”) while approximately 17,000 lived in foreign countries. The Advisory Committee on Education estimated that 2,500 school-age children accompanied their parents at foreign stations. Many of the parents worked in the diplomatic and consular services as employees of the Department of State; 15 ambassadors, 40 ministers, 500 consuls, and thousands of lower ranking employees staffed the United States missions around the world. In addition, representatives of the Departments of Treasury, War, Navy, Agriculture, Labor and Commerce were also working abroad on behalf of their government, and the numbers were readily increasing in Latin American under FDR’s Good Neighbor programs.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 172-173.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 172.

⁹⁰ Blauch and Iverson, *Education of Children on Federal Reservations: Staff Study Number 17*, pp. 80-81.

US government employees accepting positions abroad often found school placement for their children difficult. Depending on location, schools were available, but outside major urban centers there were few options. And even in the capitals, schooling alternatives were limited at best; seldom were there independent American schools available. As a result, children could enroll in expensive private schools, “foreign” schools run by European nationals, or be sent home.⁹¹ The report found that...

*Parents frequently find it difficult to locate suitable school facilities that are within their means. Often the school situation is so unsatisfactory that parents find it necessary to send their children back home to continue their education, which includes a separation of the family and a serious financial burden for employees with low incomes.*⁹²

Those who did place their children in independent, denominational, or local schools frequently complained to State Department representatives. Differences in teaching methods were a central concern. Parents were frustrated with extraneous assignments and time consuming, traditional instruction. Many lamented the “failure” of these schools to prepare their children for college in the United States.⁹³ The committee reported that...

*Upon returning home from a long term at foreign posts, parents frequently express regret that their children failed to acquire an American point of view. They are handicapped in meeting situations in their home country upon leaving school. Many feel that their children have been placed at a disadvantage of several years in comparison with American trained youth.*⁹⁴

In light of its findings, the committee condemned the lack of an educational policy for children at foreign stations as “unjust to many parents and their children.”⁹⁵

The committee’s attention to education at foreign stations revealed that the Department of State had been aware of the school problem faced by employees abroad

⁹¹ Advisory Committee on Education, *The Federal Government and Education*, p. 172.

⁹² Blauch and Iverson, *Education of Children on Federal Reservations: Staff Study Number 17*, p. 124.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

for more than “a generation”. Yet, the department claimed it had “never been in a position to assume any responsibility for its solution.”⁹⁶ As such, employees of the diplomatic and consular staff were left to find their own remedies; in the absence of acceptable schools, home schooling and private tutoring were options for some, but others had no choice but to refuse transfers and terminate their service abroad.

Built directly from the recommendations of the Advisory Committee’s 1938 report, a new legislative initiative, the Federal Aid to Education Bill of 1939, addressed the broad issues of inequality in US education. Significantly, it included provisions for the education of children at foreign stations. The favorable report by the majority of the Senate subcommittee strongly suggested that “there is not the faintest hope that any degree of equality of opportunity will or can exist in these United States” without federal aid to education.⁹⁷ Opponents felt differently, and used their influence to stop the movement of the bill past the full committee. Senator Robert Taft, who led the opposition, argued that beginning a program of federal aid to education represented a departure “from a basic policy pursued since 1789.”⁹⁸ Critical of New Deal spending, Taft also opposed the significant expenditures required by the bill. Additionally, given the bill’s attention to the inequality of Negro education, Taft expressed a common Northern sentiment that “in effect, the bill is a bill for the relief of the Southern States.”⁹⁹

As war loomed in Europe, it is noteworthy that both opponents and advocates of federal aid to education employed anti-German rhetoric during the bill’s 1939 hearings.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 16.

⁹⁷ Elbert D. Thomas, Senate Committee on Education and Labor, *Report: Federal Aid to Education Bill of 1939*, 76th Cong., 1st sess., 3 April 1939, S. Report 244, p. 1.

⁹⁸ Robert Taft, Senate Committee on Education and Labor, *Individual Views: Federal Aid to Education Bill of 1939*, 76th Cong., 1st sess., 24 April 24, 1939, S. Report 244 - Part 2, p. 1.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 4.

George Zook, Vice Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Education, used an anecdote to stress the need for equality of education in a democracy:

*Several years ago I was talking with a very prominent educational officer in Germany and telling him some of our problems in secondary education including our problems in the development of citizens. He looked at me with something of a pitying look and said, 'Well, you people in America ought to know by now that democracy does not work. We tried it in Germany and we know. You cannot lift the level of the average up to the level of the best. Nobody can do that, not even you Americans.'*¹⁰⁰

Senator Taft, in opposition, matched Zook's attempt to appeal to growing anti-German sentiment:

*Federal control of the educational field presents a threat to individual freedom. In no way more than the schools have the totalitarian states of Europe spread the doctrines of communism and fascism. The man who can educate the children of the country can spread throughout this country any current "ism" which happens to be predominant in Washington.*¹⁰¹

Anti-German and anti-Axis sentiment would eventually play a crucial role in securing federal aid for US-sponsored schools and educational programming in Latin America. While Congress funded neither the broad domestic reforms nor the plans for the education of US children abroad in 1939, the Department of State would soon begin a program of funding for American schools, US cultural centers, and mass media education programs in Latin America. The approaching world war had begun to alter the US government's approaches to foreign aid, and the onset of a new "national emergency" forced intense focus on the "good neighbors" in the hemisphere.

Two years later, when the Educational Finance Bill of 1941 was introduced in Congress, this modified version of the 1939 educational funding bill suffered the same

¹⁰⁰ George F. Zook, testimony, *S1305*, 2 March 1939, p. 87.

¹⁰¹ Taft, Senate Committee on Education and Labor, *Individual Views: Federal Aid to Education Bill of 1939*, p. 1.

fate as its predecessor. It died in committee. Interestingly, the new bill did not include a provision for aiding in the education of US children at foreign stations. Funding was still needed, but as the OIAA and the Department of State took an increasing interest in American schools abroad, they found other approaches to securing funds. Attached to a bill promoting federal aid to education, whose controversial provisions would reshape the federal-state relationship in education and ignite racially-charged debates over states rights, the funding of American schools overseas would surely be long delayed. In a climate of world war, the OIAA and the Department of State found a more expedient approach to such funding and, in doing so, helped to define the new educational activism of the federal government.

Educational and Cultural Convergence

This chapter provides important context for the seven chapters that follow. Moving forward, I argue that US educational and cultural influence in Latin America increased markedly through transnational relationships that were fostered by the Good Neighbor policies, the new Pan Americanism, and US cultural diplomacy. Historically, the region had looked to Europe for cultural inspiration and based its national education systems on French, Spanish, and German models and philosophies. Yet after the First World War as Latin Americans looked more intently toward the North, they saw the US as a “modern” nation with a powerful industrialized economy, stable democratic governance, and social stability based on a thriving middle class. The contrast with Europe, a continent that spent the first half of the century at or heading into war, was stark. Though the US was plagued with its own problems during those decades, it increasingly held appeal to Latin Americans as a model of modernity. Cultural

stereotypes of the Yankee were reconsidered by some, and many in the region developed new familiarity with the culture, history, and geography of its Northern neighbor. Significantly in this process, the US system of public and private education came to be widely recognized in Latin America as a model worth emulating. Among Latin American politicians, policymakers and educators, there would be clear acknowledgement of deficiencies in the US system and race segregation in the schools of the US South was particularly troublesome for some. But, overall Latin Americans began to recognize much of value in US educational and cultural models.

In the Colombian case, engagement with US educational and cultural philosophies, models, and resources was evident from many corners in the middle decades of the twentieth century. Government leaders, national educational and cultural bureaucracies, intellectuals, academics, educators, parents, students and especially business leaders all accessed US resources as they constructed their own version of modernity. Most significantly, and as the chapters ahead demonstrate, the emerging Colombian middle and professional classes proved extremely enthusiastic about US-style education and philosophies. The European-influenced, elite-monopolized national education system offered only limited opportunities for these classes, and as their ranks increased demands for educational services could not be met by existing infrastructure. Middle class students and families found US-styled alternatives to traditional education tremendously appealing, and they took advantage of educational resources and opportunities that the OIAA initiated: language courses, business training, secretarial programs, professional development seminars, technical/scientific instruction, and open access to universities. Moving forward, this study demonstrates that US educational and

cultural influence in Colombia flowed not only from the top down, but from the bottom up and, more significantly, from the middle outward.

Chapter Two

Foreign Classrooms in Latin America

This chapter analyzes the demand for independent, non-sectarian US-sponsored schools (American schools) in Latin America and the decision of cultural diplomats to begin supporting them in the early 1940s. As the last chapter detailed, domestic education reformers in the 1930s had asserted a federal obligation to US children at foreign stations but had failed to convince Congress of a duty to act. In the field, the Department of State recognized a lack of suitable educational options for the children of its employees as well as other US citizens residing abroad, but it made little effort to address the problem. On the eve of the world war, the OIAA acted in its stead. Rising numbers of US families living in Latin America, changes to US citizenship statutes, and implementation of a new US Foreign Service marriage policy had the effect of increasing the pool of US students abroad and this garnered OIAA attention. Significantly, however, the OIAA decision to fund American schools was not simply motivated by a desire to provide educational opportunity as a matter of fairness. By the early 1940s, the agency was beginning to recognize the broad utility of these schools. While they were both crucial to the growth of US businesses in the region and increasingly necessary in support of diplomatic staff at foreign stations, these schools also provided US access to influential and elite Latin American families and were an effective means for countering Axis influence.

The chapter begins with a statistical portrait of US citizens living in the Latin America at the start of World War II and surveys the various types of schools founded by US citizens in the region. Contemporary changes to US citizenship statutes and State

Department personnel policies that impacted the demand for these school are also considered. Next the chapter surveys schools sponsored by immigrants from Axis nations in the region. It considers Latin American and US governments' concerns that these schools were indoctrinating children to fascist ideology and organizing fifth columns to support an eventual Axis invasion of the hemisphere. The closure of two prominent German schools in Bogotá and Barranquilla is analyzed against the backdrop of an emerging Colombian-US alliance. Finally, the chapter details how fear of German influence in Latin American classrooms convinced cultural diplomats to encourage and financially support new and existing American schools in the region.

Diplomats, Businessmen, Missionaries and US-sponsored Schools in Latin America

US Citizens Residing in Latin America

The number of US citizens living in Latin America at the start of World War II was estimated by the State Department and the OIAA at 60,000. The largest concentration was found in the Panama Canal Zone; 25% of the US citizens in Latin America were zonians living on what had been Colombian national territory only four decades earlier. Zonians were primarily military but also civilian employees of the US government, and many lived with their families on the military bases and towns around the canal. There were actually more US dependents in the zone than US military or civilian employees, and US-styled schools were provided for their children. The US employees of the zone were joined by thousands of local employees. Some were Panamanians but many others were from the West Indies, Colombia and other areas of the Greater Caribbean. Originally brought to Panama as labor for the construction of the canal, many of these workers, who were racially categorized as “black,” stayed on after

the project was completed. They continued to make a living as direct employees of the canal or in the large service sector that support life in the zone. The US government provided schools for the children of all residents of the zone, but significantly, these schools were racially segregated. Zonian society was modeled on the regional racial structures of the US South.¹ After Panama, the next highest concentration of US citizens was found in Mexico, where over 22% of the Latin American total lived. Cuba had the third highest concentration of US citizens at almost 10% of the total and was followed by Brazil, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, and Argentina. Colombia, which had the eighth highest total in the region, was home to just 2,797 US citizens, and this was approximately 5% of the total US citizenry living in Latin America.²

After assignment to military posts, private employment opportunities were the major reasons individual US citizens and their dependents took up residence in the region. Among the US citizens in Latin America in 1942, approximately one-fifth were classified by the State Department as “income-earners.” This category excluded military personnel, students, dependents (wives and children), and missionaries. Surveying US income-earners resident in Latin America at the start of the war, the State Department found that 55% were employed by US businesses while 15% were employees of foreign

¹ Stephen Wolff Frenkel, “Cultural Imperialism and the Development of the Panama Canal Zone, 1912-1960” (PhD diss., Syracuse University, 1992), p. 153.

² Andrew V. Corry, Table 10: Estimated Number of American Citizens Residing in the Other American Republics as of January 1, 1942, “Memoir Proposing American Sponsored School Program, 1942-1943,” 22 Sep. 1942, Archives of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (MC 468), Series 2, Box 314, Folder 9, Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries - Fayetteville, p. 135. Though the figures presented by Corry were estimates, in the Colombian case his number appears reasonable when it is compared to the figures in the Colombian National Census completed in 1938. At that time 2,152 North Americans were identified as residents of the nation. Though this figure included Canadians, based on Canadian totals in later censuses in 1951 and 1964, it is reasonable to assume that US nationals were all but a few dozen of the 2,152. The difference between the two figures (2797 in 1942 and 2152 in 1938) is easily explained by the increases in US government employees, businessmen and dependents in Colombia that occurred in the buildup to the war. “Nacionalidad y estado civil de los habitantes,” Cuadro 61, *Censo General de Población: 5 de Julio de 1938*, p. 143.

firms. US lawyers, doctors, or dentists with established local practices were 13% of the total. Civilian employees of the US government including diplomatic and consular staffs were 8%. “Other income-earners,” a catch-all category that included engineers and teachers, accounted for 8% of those earning a living in the region. Notably, the greatest number of US citizens employed in Latin America lived and worked in Mexico. There, the US employment situation was unique as more US citizens worked for Mexican or foreign firms than US businesses. The second highest number of US income-earners was found in Venezuela, where US oil companies had a strong presence. Most income-earning US citizens in that nation were employed by US firms. Reflecting the development of strong economic ties between Colombia and the US after World War I, Colombia ranked fourth in the total number of resident US income-earners. It had slightly less than third-ranking Cuba and slightly more than Brazil and Argentina.³

US government employees and military personnel were a very small percentage of total US citizens living in Colombia in 1942. Just ninety-eight individuals (or 3.5%) of the total 2,797 US citizens were employed by the diplomatic and consular services, the military or other departments of the executive branch. There were a few US lawyers and doctors (eleven individuals, combined) and a several dozen “other professionals” (a category that was dominated by engineers). There were 748 US businessmen employed by US corporations and smaller numbers employed by Colombian or foreign firms (167). An additional 132 US businessmen were “engaged independently in business.” In the field of education, there were 107 US teachers employed in Colombia, and three-quarters of these worked in religious schools most of which had been established by US Protestant

³ Corry, “Memoir,” pp. 39-40.

missionaries. Finally, dependents of income earners comprised 45% of total US citizenry in Colombia. Between wives and children, this group amounted to 1,272 individuals.⁴

Given the limits of the Colombian national education system, the usual short-term nature of US business assignments abroad, and both language and cultural differences, enrolling US children in official Colombian government schools was seldom an option for US families. In the absence of the network of independent and non-sectarian American schools that would later emerge, some US families in Colombia exercised the option of sending their children to Protestant schools founded by US nationals. In Barranquilla and Bogotá, schools founded by US Presbyterians had well established secondary programs. Families who lived at a distance from these cities boarded their sons or daughters with friends who lived near the campuses. A second schooling option for locally-residing US families was bringing private tutors from the US to teach their children. This was an expensive option and difficult to arrange from abroad. Yet a third option was enrolling children in the highly-regarded bilingual schools run by German or other European nationals in the principal urban centers of the country. Wartime politics in the 1930s would add an undesirable political dynamic to an education in a German or Italian school and, for many, language barriers made these schools unlikely options. Still, lacking other high-quality schools, it was a choice made by some US families. Finally, a fourth option was splitting up the family and sending children home to attend school in the US. Those who exercised this option usually employed tutors to teach the younger children but sent older children home to live with relatives and attend public high schools. For others, it meant paying for expensive private boarding schools at home. The choice to separate the family was difficult and many parents were unwilling to do it. As a

⁴ Corry, "Memoir," p. 33a.

result, some employees rejected assignments abroad over educational concerns. For those already employed abroad, educational challenges often forced sales of businesses or resignations of position as they returned home with school-age children. Significantly, as the number of US families living in Latin America increased in the build up to the world war, they placed pressure on the US government to support independent, non-sectarian schools with US curricula. Like education reformers at home, they pressured their government to recognize an obligation for the education of their children.

Surveying US Schools in Latin America

Prior to establishing formal US government support for the education of US children abroad, Rockefeller's OIAA financed an exhaustive survey of all schools in Latin America founded and operated by US citizens. On behalf of the OIAA, Andrew Corry conducted a tour of the entire region over nine months in 1941 and 1942. Concern for Axis influence over Latin American school children and their parents was behind the investigative project. Visiting 100 schools and conducting 750 interviews, Corry's main objective "was to determine how the dangerous influence of Axis-oriented schools can be neutralized or, better said, counteracted by appropriate activities of American-sponsored schools."⁵ The survey identified 505 schools in Latin America that were sponsored by US citizens, corporations, and religious communities. Schools fell into one of three categories. Two-thirds of these schools were denominational and affiliated with the proselytizing missions of US-based churches. Almost all were Protestant. Most of the remaining one-third were company schools which served either the children of private companies' US employees or the children of local, national employees. Only a small minority, just twenty-five schools (or less than 5% of the total) had neither religious nor

⁵ Corry, "Memoir," p. 11.

corporate affiliation.⁶ These independent and non-sectarian schools were the ones that would soon be offered funding and grouped under the label “American Schools.”

National and regional capitals throughout Latin America had a small number of large US Protestant schools with both primary and secondary sections. These schools catered to upper-class families who might be Protestant, non-Catholic or disillusioned by traditional Catholic education. Many of these schools were well regarded and valued as an alternative to Catholic dominated and European-styled curriculum. In Colombia, where the Catholic Church dominated secondary education, two high-quality and elite-exclusive schools, the Colegios Americanos, had been founded at Barranquilla and Bogotá in the mid-to-late nineteenth century by Presbyterian missionaries. These schools had separate campuses for boys and girls. They emphasized English, but taught most subjects in Spanish. Given the constitutional control of the Catholic Church over educational services, religious activity and religious teachings in these schools were severely restricted. The majority of US Protestant schools in Colombia and throughout Latin America, however, were not such elite institutions. Most were small primary-only schools located in both urban centers and rural zones. Indian populations were the contemporary target of many US Protestant missions in Latin America, and reflecting this focus more than half of the total US denominational schools in the region were located in heavily-indigenous Peru and Bolivia. Though paling in comparison, Colombia with thirty-six denominational schools had the third highest number in the region. Chile, Brazil, and Mexico followed.⁷ Within South America, more than a dozen different US-based Protestant denominations operated schools, and in the aggregate, Adventists had

⁶ Ibid., p. 1.

⁷ Ibid.

the strongest presence with more than half of the schools. Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist schools were less numerous, but because they were often concentrated in specific countries they had a dominant presence in some education markets. In Colombia, all but one of the US denominational schools was Presbyterian.⁸

Schools sponsored by US companies, the second category of schools identified by Corry, were found throughout the region but were most common in mining towns of the Andes, around Venezuelan oil fields, on the fruit plantations of the Caribbean, and near rubber operations in the Amazon Basin and especially Brazil. As local schools were rare in the remote areas where these industries were centered, many countries required US and other foreign companies to provide such schools for the education of children of local employees. Indeed, 80% of the US company schools in South America served exclusively local rather than US populations. These schools were usually primary-only and taught the national curriculum in the local language. In some locations, such schools significantly extended the reach of limited national education systems. In South America, 50% of the company schools were in Chile. There, where US corporations dominated copper mining, eighty-one company schools enrolled over 16,000 students. Brazil's twenty-nine company schools had 10,000 pupils.⁹ These schools were essentially national schools with little educational relationship to the US. They were built and maintained by the US corporations and the director was often a US citizen, but teaching staffs were comprised of nationals of the host-country. Venezuela, where tremendous oil reserves brought local and foreign workers and families to remote fields, also had a significant number of these schools; of its thirty small company schools, twenty-two taught the

⁸ Corry, "Table 3: Distribution of American-Sponsored Schools in South America, 1942. Denominational Schools: By Denomination, Type and Number," in "Memoir," p. 125.

⁹ Corry, "Memoir," p. 27.

national curriculum in Spanish to Venezuelan children while eight offered a US-style curriculum in English to US children and some upper-class locals whose parents were affiliated with the oil companies. Colombia had just five company schools. Tropical Oil and the Colombian Petroleum Company, both US concerns, operated three schools while the United Fruit Company ran two. Each of the company schools in Colombia were primary-only and taught a US curriculum in English. Colombian law did not require foreign companies to provide for the education of their local employees' children; thus, while a few students were the children of Colombian managers, most were US nationals.¹⁰

Finally, the third category of US-sponsored schools was independent and non-sectarian (American schools). These schools were founded and operated by US nationals and were usually located in the national capitals or important regional cities. They had small student bodies. At the time of Corry's survey, most were primary-only although it was not unusual for a few secondary-level students to be tutored in these schools. Because it was common for US government and business employees to be stationed in Latin America for short assignments that infrequently exceeded two or three years, most parents desired a US-style education for their children. They wanted their children to be able to easily transition back into schools in the US when their assignments or time abroad ended. Language barriers prevented many from enrolling in private schools or in the high-quality and elite-serving US Protestant schools, but so too did finances; US citizens who chose to live and work overseas were usually drawn from the middle classes in the US. Families of salesmen, engineers, bank managers, export representatives, and

¹⁰ Corry, "Table 2: Distribution of American-Sponsored Schools in South America, 1942. Company Schools: By Industry, Type and Number," in "Memoir," p. 126.

Foreign Service staffers could not pay high tuition rates. And since many US businessmen were self-employed or the sole sales representatives of their firms in a region, no company schools existed for many US children. Independently operated US schools, then, developed out of necessity and were most often started by the wives of US businessmen and Foreign Service employees as cooperative efforts at homes schooling.¹¹ As this study will demonstrate, these schools were founded to serve the needs of US, European and binational children, but once they grew, left the confines of private homes and established an institutional identity, they rapidly attracted local populations. Based on the recommendations of the Corry report, these independent schools and not US denominational or company schools began to receive US government assistance in the early 1940s.

Corry calculated that almost 60,000 children were enrolled in US-sponsored denominational, company and independent schools in Latin America. He estimated that since 1910 close to one million children had attended these schools, and only small percentages were not nationals of the host country. In Colombia, 2,664 pupils were enrolled in US-sponsored schools in 1942. US nationals were the majority of the 133 students who attended the schools funded by petroleum and banana export companies as well as in the two small independent schools at Barranquilla and Bogotá. The rest, the more than 2,500 students who attended US-sponsored denominational schools, were Colombian nationals. Comparatively, Colombia had significantly fewer students enrolled in each type of US-sponsored school than countries with larger US corporate presence.¹²

¹¹ Corry, "Memoir," p. 31.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 22- 27.

As Rockefeller's OIAA and the Department of State sought to bolster US schools in Latin America as a counterbalance to Axis cultural influence, the Corry report revealed that most existing US-sponsored schools in the region hardly reflected US educational philosophy, standards, models, or culture. His report argued that lack of US curriculum was a lost opportunity for gaining cultural influence. Over 90% of these US-sponsored schools taught only the national curriculum, and few included US content in subjects. Indeed, 79% did not even offer English classes; bilingualism was "not a prominent objective" of US-sponsored education in Latin America.¹³ Excepting the schools exclusively serving US children, few other schools sought a US affiliation or label. Company schools for the children of local employees essentially functioned as national schools and were required by host-country laws to adapt to local standards and curriculum. Many were integrated into the local culture. Given their vulnerability as targets of anti-imperialists, they purposefully did not stand out as foreign. Similarly, most denominational schools "seldom if ever consciously term[ed] themselves 'American' schools."¹⁴ Their affiliation was with denominations and not nations. The high-quality US-sponsored Protestant schools which served the upper class and were an alternative to Catholic and European-style education were an exception. In Colombia these schools marketed themselves less on their Protestant affiliations and more on the modern, US-style approach they took to education.

Marriage, Citizenship, and Demand for US Classrooms Abroad

The earliest independent, non-sectarian American schools in Latin America were neither owned nor run by businesses or government, but they served the needs of both.

¹³ Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 163.

They were institutions that were locally operated by communities of families who came together far from home around common educational goals. Sewing machine and typewriter salesmen, geologists and telephone engineers, clerical secretaries, bank clerks, ambassadors, and especially wives built the earliest American schools as mothers and fathers of young children. In examining the demand for American schools abroad and Washington's emerging commitment to them, it is crucial to recognize families at the center of demand, rather than business and government.

Changes to US government immigration and citizenship statutes in the mid-1930s produced an important classificatory increase in the number of US families living overseas and added new voices to the demand for American schools in foreign cities. Before the 1930s, statutes created obstacles to citizenship for many US-born women (and their children) that lived abroad. While marriage in the US was historically regulated at the state level, federal law encouraged some types of marriages, discouraged others, and denied citizenship to certain children born to US parents.¹⁵ Gender bias written into law limited the pool of children who were considered US citizens abroad and contributed to a delay in recognition of a federal obligation to them. Under the Expatriation Act of 1907, the principle that women's citizenship derived from her husband was established in law. While a US male who married a foreign woman passed citizenship onto his wife and her children, US females who married foreigners were stripped of citizenship. Any children a woman had going into the marriage lost US citizenship as well. In the aftermath of women's suffrage in the early 1920s, newly empowered women's organization pressured Congress to eliminate such gender bias in citizenship and immigration statutes. With the

¹⁵ Nancy F. Cott, "Marriage and Women's Citizenship in the United States, 1830-1934," *The American Historical Review* 103, no. 5 (December 1998), pp. 1461-1464.

Cable Act of 1922, Congress did so, but it left a variety of conditions in place that continued to allow loss of citizenship for women and their children and continued to give preference to US men and their families in matters of immigration, naturalization, and citizenship. Women who lived abroad with their foreign husbands, for example, were subjected to periodic US residency requirements in order to maintain their citizenship.¹⁶

Through the Citizenship Act of 1934, women's citizenship was finally "separated from marriage consequences" and extended residency abroad no longer resulted in loss of citizenship. Importantly, the law also eliminated gender bias in the granting of citizenship to children born overseas. This was a significant change that meant that citizenship of a child was now established by blood relation to a US parent and not derived from citizenship of the father.¹⁷ During the 1930s, as US education reformers, legislators and diplomatic policymakers considered the question of education for US children at foreign stations, the children of US mothers were no longer excluded from the pool of students that the federal government was beginning to acknowledge.

The new citizenship law of 1934, however, also created a US residency requirement for some children of US citizens overseas. Children born to two US citizen parents were not subjected to the new residency requirements as long as one parent had lived in the US prior to the birth of the child. But, in transnational families --families in which a US citizen was married to a foreign national-- US citizenship would not transfer to children until they had lived in the US for a total of five years before reaching age eighteen. An oath of allegiance to the nation at the age of twenty-one was also required.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 1464-1468..

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 1469.

¹⁸ Lester B. Orfield, "The Citizenship Act of 1934," *The University of Chicago Law Review* 2, no.1 (December 1934), pp. 99-118.

This new residency requirement for the maintenance of a child's citizenship created a difficult situation for some US parents overseas; remarkably, at a time when US diplomatic missions were increasing in size in Latin America, the children of US Foreign Service employees along with other US government agencies were not exempt from the new residency requirements. Given a contemporary rise in the number of transnational marriages among this population (detailed below), this placed more and more families in a difficult position. In order to establish or maintain a child's citizenship, these and other transnational families had to endure some level of family separation; children might be sent home to live with relatives or one parent might return to live with the child in the United States for the five year period. From a family perspective, neither of these options was ideal. These requirements made it likely that some foreign born children with one US parent would never be granted citizenship. Ironically, from the perspective of overseas parents with few good schooling options for their children, one indirect benefit of the residency requirement was that the child would be in the US during important school years.

The hardship imposed by the residency requirements for some children was recognized and partially addressed in subsequent legislation. Under the Nationality Act of 1940 foreign-born US children with one US parent still had to live in the US for 5 years in order for citizenship to transfer to them, but now they were required to do so between the ages of 13 and 21. This change extended the age for completing the requirement upward by three years while simultaneously ensuring that these children would be resident in the US at least partly during secondary school years. This upward shift of the age of residency to the teenage and early adult years reflected the important role

lawmakers believed schools in the US could play in teaching and fostering loyal citizenship among these foreign-born children. At that time, a residency requirement was also imposed on the child's single US parent; in order to transfer citizenship, that parent had to have lived in the US or one of its outlying possessions for 10 years (before the birth of the child) and half of those years had to have been after the age of 16. Residency requirements for both the US parent and child aimed to eliminate a category of people who lived their entire lives abroad, were considered culturally foreigners and US citizens "in name only" by policymakers.¹⁹ Significantly, residency requirements for US citizenship suppressed demand for American schools in Latin America.

Marriage and family policies imposed on State Department personnel also directly impacted the demand for American schools abroad. The children of employees of the Foreign Service and other US government agencies did not by themselves account for the total demand for US-style education abroad, but they were a growing and influential subset of that demand. Over the course of the 1930s and early 1940s, growing numbers of US Foreign Service officers and clerks were posted to Latin America. While increasing numbers of these employees brought spouses and children with them, these percentages were then relatively low and the lack of schools for children was one consideration that acted to suppress the numbers of families arriving at foreign posts. The more significant trend in marriage and family demographics at foreign stations was for US government employees to marry foreign spouses and begin families abroad. By 1936, approximately 19% of all Foreign Service officers had married alien spouses. Furthermore, approximately 27% of the US citizens on clerical staffs at embassies and consulates had

¹⁹ Richard W. Flournoy, "Revision of Nationality Laws of the United States," *American Journal of International Law* 34, no.1 (January 1940), pp. 43-46.

done the same, and the marriage trend in both categories of employment was strengthening.²⁰ Such transnational marriages were viewed unfavorably by Washington, and contemporaneous State Department personnel regulations attempted to halt them.

In November of 1936, FDR issued Executive Order 7497 that officially banned the marriages of Foreign Service Officers to aliens. Ministers and ambassadors were exempt from the regulation. Although clerks were also exempt, this was only temporary and by the 1940s, the ban also applied to them. Executive Order 7497 required that any Foreign Service officer intending to marry a foreign national had to request and receive permission to do so from the Secretary of State. The order made clear that such requests would likely be denied and result in termination of the individual from service. The main justification provided for the new regulation was the requirement that all Foreign Service officers be fully available for transfer at the discretion of the president and the service. Marriages to foreign nationals, it was argued, made for “messy” situations that limited the locations to which the couple could be posted.²¹ Messy situations had been on the rise in the “shuffling” of US diplomats between European posts in the build-up to World War II. Wives of German, Russian, French and British nationality accounted for 70% of all alien wives of officers, and as the Old Continent came closer to open hostilities, marriages effected and at times made difficult the placement of personnel.²² Citizenship residency

²⁰ Ellery C. Stowell, “The Ban of Alien Marriages in the Foreign Service,” *The American Journal of International Law* 31, no. 1 (January 1937), p. 92, 6n.

²¹ R. Walton Moore to American Diplomatic and Consular Officers, 28 Nov. 1936, “Marriage of Foreign Service Officers with Foreign Wives.” Reprinted in *The American Journal of International Law* 31, no.1, Supplement: Official Documents (January 1937), pp. 50-51; Ellery C. Stowell, “Cramping Our Foreign Service,” *The American Journal of International Law* 29, no. 2 (April 1935), p. 315; George S. Messersmith, testimony, *HR9544*, 6 Dec. 1937, p. 157.

²² Stowell, “The Ban of Alien Marriages in the Foreign Service,” p. 92, 6n; “Duty v. Love,” *Time*, 14 Dec. 1936, pp. 16-17.

requirements for children and US adults in transnational marriages complicated placement even further.

The ban of foreign marriages was reported by the *New York Times* to have hit the Foreign Service “like a bombshell.” Given diplomats’ long-term residencies outside of their home countries, it was only logical that transnational marriages would occur with some frequency. Surveying foreign diplomats accredited to their national embassies or legations in Washington, the paper also reported that many foreign diplomats had wives from the US or other countries even though many of their own “governments impose marriage restrictions.”²³ The State Department acknowledged their discomfort in imposing the ban and made clear that they did not question the valuable contributions foreign wives made to US diplomacy. These women were “in most cases very fine persons.” But as war approached, the Department now believed these marriages to be “against the Government’s best interests” and thought it best “that our young men should be married to Americans.”²⁴ In issuing the order the Department had made clear it “has felt loath” to act on the ban, but “in the present condition of world affairs, however, any tendency further to increase the number of marriages of this character must be regarded with concern.”²⁵

Significantly, the salaries for Foreign Service officers were far from lucrative. While lower costs of living at many Latin American posts allowed officers to live at a relatively higher standard than they did at home, officers were not wealthy men. They were middle class and their pay level reflected it. The department understood that low salaries made it difficult for the young and single officers to return stateside for

²³ Bertrum D. Huzen, “Alien Wives Ban Hits Career Men,” *NYT*, 6 Dec. 1936.

²⁴ Messersmith, testimony, *HR 9544*, p. 157.

²⁵ Moore, “Marriage of Foreign Service Officers with Foreign Wives,” pp. 50-51.

vacations, and this reduced their opportunities to meet “American girls.” Better pay and regular trips home were seen as long-term solutions, but in the short-term it was hoped an official ban on marriages to aliens would eliminate the problem.²⁶ Below the rank of officer, where pay levels were in a lower middle-class range, clerk and secretary positions were more likely to be occupied by females than males, and approximately half of these lower ranking positions were filled by foreign nationals of the host country.²⁷ Thus it was not unusual for marriages to originate from within diplomatic staffs at foreign stations.

As developing tensions in Europe limited the growth of diplomatic missions there, the US Foreign Service experienced a growth spurt in Latin America. Amidst the climate of Good Neighborliness that the US was working hard to foster, the State Department’s ban on transnational marriages stood in sharp contrast to the rhetoric of Pan American unity. Mutual understanding may have been the goal of the new cultural diplomacy, but the marriage ban demonstrated that it clearly had limits. Official policy encouraged Latin American-US cultural contact, but for the very people charged with officially facilitating it locally, marriage became a national border that they could not cross. The marriage ban within the Foreign Service clearly reflected State Department concern with the placement of diplomatic personnel, but a general suspicion of foreigners and questioning of their loyalties underpinned the policy in the lead-up to the world war. Commentators recognized the undercurrent of suspicion and felt that the State Department was opening

²⁶ Messersmith, testimony, *HR9544*, p. 157.

²⁷ Homer L. Calkin, *Women in American Foreign Affairs* (Washington: United States Department of State, 1977), pp. 46, 66-67.

itself to charges of extreme nationalism – the very phenomenon that “it has been the policy of the Administration to combat.”²⁸

Significantly, by 1940 US-sponsored overseas education was a topic of concern in Washington. With an increasing US family presence in Latin America and growing calls for government support of schools from diplomats, the overseas business community, and domestic education reformers, it was not surprising that in 1940 exemptions to the residency requirement were extended to many US children who were previously regulated by it. All children of US government employees who lived overseas with their parents were now exempt; it no longer mattered if one of a child’s parents was a non-US citizen. Additionally, the children of employees of businesses, foundations, and private organizations that were based in the US (whether commercial, educational, or religious) were also exempt. As the US diplomatic, cultural and business presence in Latin America was then growing, this alleviated a significant burden on transnational families. Still, these exemptions did not cover everyone and a built-in gender bias persisted against women. If a US parent in a transnational marriage was a housewife, unemployed, employed by a foreign business or organization, or self-employed, their children were not eligible for the exemption.²⁹ Still, the extension of the exemption in 1940 ensured that fewer children of US citizens would be sent home for schooling, and this increased the local demand for independent, non-sectarian American schools. US government support for overseas schools emerged as the pool of parents and students demanding better educational options increased abroad.

²⁸ Stowell, “The Ban of Alien Marriages in the Foreign Service,” p. 93.

²⁹ Charles Cheney Hyde, “The Nationality Act of 1940,” *The American Journal of International Law* 35, no. 2 (April 1941), pp. 314-319.

Axis Schools in Latin America

Fifth Column Fears

As discussed in the first chapter, during the 1930s debates over education reform in the US recognized the existence of US children abroad and identified the serious problems many parents faced in securing quality education for them. Articulating a federal government obligation to these children was an important outgrowth of those debates, and it helped to expedite the establishment of a formal assistance program for American schools in Latin America. Yet the willingness of the State Department and the US Congress to support these schools had more to do with fears of Axis influence in the region than concern for its obligation to its own citizens abroad. In Latin America, schools affiliated with German, Italian and Japanese immigrant communities were prominent on the educational landscape. Given Axis rhetoric of world domination, German, Italian and Japanese schools began to receive critical attention from host-country governments, the national and international press, and Washington.

The Corry report heightened OIAA and State Department fears that Axis and other European-sponsored schools in Latin America produced strong foreign cultural influences in the region. Corry stressed that “the associations and friendships” formed in and around schools “among students, and their elders, are very basic stuff of popular cultural influence.”³⁰ He estimated that schools sponsored by non-US foreigners constituted approximately one-third of all schools in the other American republics. Many of these schools were local institutions that had been originally established by immigrants to meet educational needs in communities without classrooms. Some were secular, but others were religious. As was the case in Colombia, the majority of denominational

³⁰ Corry, “Memoir,” p. 16.

schools were Catholic and were operated by religious orders of French, Spanish, Italian, Belgian and, in some cases, German origin. Only one in five foreign denominational schools was non-Catholic and these were almost exclusively Protestant schools founded by US, British, and German nationals. Jewish schools founded by Europeans were a small percentage of the foreign-sponsored schools as well. Corry concluded that in comparison to the foreign-run Catholic schools, which were often highly-regarded, non-Catholic denominational schools “as a rule find the upper class and upper-middle class in great part inaccessible.”³¹

As the Axis alliance was activated, schools associated with Germany, Italy and Japan in Latin America received more intense and widespread scrutiny. The Corry report estimated that there were 888 Axis-sponsored schools in Latin America. German schools were the majority at 75% of the total compared to 11% and 14% for Italian and Japanese schools, respectively. By far the greatest concentrations of presumed Axis schools were in Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay where 90% of the schools identified as German were located. Most of Italian schools were also in these three countries. The 127 Japanese schools identified in the report were mostly in Peru and Brazil.³² Overall, Corry estimated that Axis schools educated up to two-thirds more Latin American nationals than the aggregate US company, denominational, and independent schools.³³

To those nations with the majority of the Axis schools, sizeable immigrant populations from Germany and Italy --and to a much lesser extent Japan-- had come in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Immigration had been encouraged by Latin American governments for a variety of reasons: as a vehicle for modernization of labor

³¹ Ibid., p. 15.

³² Ibid., p. 134.

³³ Ibid., pp. 22-23.

and economies, to settle vulnerable and sparsely populated national frontiers, and to racially “whiten” national populations.³⁴ Arriving immigrant groups often faced a common Latin American reality which was a lack of government funded schools for their children. As a result, many immigrant communities established their own schools in the rural or urban pockets where they settled.³⁵ Japanese schools were established in commercial, fishing and agricultural communities on the Pacific coast. Italian and German schools were found in rural communities as well as in capitals, large cities, and regional centers along the Atlantic. Most of these Axis schools operated without financial assistance of the host nation and relied on religious and private funding. Occasional educational grants or assistance to such schools from the German, Italian and Japanese governments or private organizations in their home countries were not uncommon, and they became more frequent as the world war approached.³⁶ The Corry report argued that many of the German schools, though independently founded by immigrant groups, were directly controlled from Berlin.

Broadly, German schools in Latin America fell into two categories. German community schools served first and second generation German immigrant communities throughout the region. The US and some Latin American governments believed these community schools, whether based in frontier areas settled by German immigrants or urban neighborhoods dominated by immigrants and their descendents, were indoctrinating Nazi ideology among the young and preparing them to assist an eventual

³⁴ On immigration as a method of whitening a national population see Lilian Guerra, “From Revolution to Involvement in the early Cuban Republic: Conflicts over Race, Class, and Nation, 1902-1906,” in *Race & Nation in Modern Latin America*; Richard Graham, Thomas Skidmore, Aline Helg, and Alan Knight, eds., *The Idea of Race in Latin America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990).

³⁵ For the example of immigrant communities in Brazil see Jeffrey Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity: Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

³⁶ Corry, “Memoir,” p. 18.

Nazi conquest of the Americas. Corry considered these schools incubators of fifth columns. The second type of German schools offered college preparatory programs and served wealthy upper-class nationals of German descent. Because German educational theories had modernist appeal in the early twentieth century, these schools were also popular with non-German Latin American elites. As a result, as Europe moved toward war in the 1930s, these schools were a source of great concern for those worried about Nazi influence over Latin America's ruling classes. Indicative of that concern, these upper-class schools became targets for closure by national governments as Nazi ambitions played out in Europe. At the same time, the more numerous immigrant community schools were targeted for nationalization rather than elimination.

Corry further classified German schools in Latin America in one of two categories. They were either subversive or collaborationist. Most "subversive" German schools were community schools located in areas where the majority of residents were German immigrants or citizens of German ancestry. According to Corry's investigation, their educational programs emphasized German nationalism, framed Pan-Germanic identity as a racial identity, and connected students to all aspects of German culture. German was the language of instruction and all texts came from Berlin. As the Nazis rose to power in Germany and headed towards war, Hitler Youth groups, Nazi salutes, intense German nationalism, and a general atmosphere of militarism were characteristic of many of these community schools. In the process of "Nazification," Corry argued, "the political aspirations, civil institutions and cultural traditions of the host-republics are depreciated."³⁷

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 20-21.

In comparison to the subversive schools, Corry labeled the institutions that served elite German and Latin American populations as collaborationists. These were high-quality schools with both primary and secondary sections. According to Corry, they received significant support from Berlin because they offered the opportunity to gain influence among the host-countries' upper classes. In these schools, German nationalism was more muted because Germans were often a minority in the student body but also because Nazis did not want to alienate nationals of the host-country. Their goal was to build pro-German sympathies "among patriotic nationals belonging to influential social groups," to stress cultural "co-partnership" and promote German language and culture as a "complement to the national culture."³⁸ Serving an elite university-bound population, they met national curriculum standards. Corry found that many schools in this category had earned such high prestige that even US families in Latin America patronized them.

It is clear that Corry (and those in Washington who responded energetically to his report) painted German, Italian, and Japanese schools in Latin America with too broad a brush and assumed direct control of them by Axis governments. Not all schools in immigrant communities were "subversive" and not all "collaboration" produced Axis sympathies among Latin American nationals. Yet, it is also clear that Berlin recognized the value of German schools and did attempt to unify school programs under Nazi ideology. The Corry report mapped in detail the organizational links that tied German schools in Latin America to the Nazi Party, and this was no fiction; subsequent historical

³⁸ Ibid., p. 21.

analysis drawn from German archives bears out an extensive Nazi campaign to control German schools in the Americas.³⁹

Max Paul Freidman's *Nazis and Good Neighbors: The United States Campaign against the Germans of Latin America in World War II* provides a detailed account of US-led program to deport German nationals from "vulnerable" areas of Latin America during the war. Freidman's study is meticulously researched and provides a fascinating account of the deportation program. Significantly, it draws on US, German, and Latin American archives. As it relates to the present discussion, Freidman argues that Berlin manipulated and "misused" the "transnational sentiment" of both German immigrants and the descendents of German immigrants abroad. Working through Latin American-based secret Nazi organizations, Berlin "bungled" its campaign to "bring the expatriate German communities into the Nazi fold" and only succeeded in destroying the local reputations of the "communities they claimed to champion."⁴⁰

Drawing on German archives, Freidman details how Nazi cultural activities in Latin America were encouraged and funded by the *Auslandsorganisation*, a department of the Nazi Party formed to promote Nazism among German peoples abroad. As relates to educational and cultural activities, this department privileged German community

³⁹ Max Paul Freidman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors: The United States Campaign against the Germans of Latin America in World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁴⁰ Freidman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors*, p. 229. Freidman also contends that the US "misread" the complexity of transnational identity among Germans and ethnic Germans in Latin America. He convincingly argues that Washington overreacted in assuming that all Germans and ethnic Germans in Latin America would obediently submit to Berlin; the deportation programs were a function of that overreaction and reflected Washington's traditional belief that Latin American governments were incapable of handling their own problems. Heavy-handed pressure was applied by the US demanding Latin American governments expel nationals and foreign residents suspected as Nazis; in the process, many innocent Latin American nationals—including Jews of German ancestry—were deported to detention camps in the US. In cataloging the individuals deported, Friedman argues that the program constituted US interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign states and disregard of the defining principle of the Good Neighbor Policy. He argues that historians should date the decline of the Good Neighbor years not from the early Cold War—when military intervention and interference clearly reappeared in US foreign policy in the region—but from deportation days of World War II.

schools and social clubs in Latin America as essential sites of influence with Germans abroad and local elites. Under orders from Berlin, local Nazi supporters “marched into meetings with boards of directors of German schools and German clubs to demand control as the true representatives of the Fuhrer.”⁴¹ Many of these takeovers were initially successful, but they eventually led to the closures of many of the schools by the host governments, based on growing distaste for and suspicion of local Nazi political activities. In retrospect, Berlin’s manipulation of German nationalism through expatriate organizations like schools and clubs in Latin America failed to produce “legions of foot soldiers ready to seize the hemisphere.”⁴² Yet in the moment, Nazi activities, and particularly those involving children and schools, fed intense fears in the US over fifth columns. Significantly, many Latin American governments themselves were cautiously monitoring Nazi political activity in the region and reacted forcefully to Nazi programs in schools and clubs

Though many German, Italian, and Japanese schools were not actively affiliated with or funded by Axis governments, the perception that all were bastions of fascism and totalitarianism played powerfully to US and Latin American policy makers. Beginning in the late 1930s, many Latin American countries placed legal restrictions on foreign schools and social organizations. With the outbreak of world war, this trend accelerated. Perceiving an Axis threat to national sovereignty, Latin American governments introduced new measures designed to check the influence of Axis educators. New laws decreed the teaching of national curriculum, employment of national teachers, and reductions in the use of foreign languages in private school classrooms. While these

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 22.

⁴² Ibid., p. 229.

measures theoretically applied equally to the existing US-sponsored and non-Axis foreign schools, it is clear that they were enforced disproportionately as controls on Axis funded institutions. The result was the closures of many German, Japanese, and Italian schools just as American schools began to expand and flourish.⁴³

The Latin American backlash against Axis schools logically began in the areas of the region with largest German, Italian, and Japanese populations. Years before the Corry report sounded the alarm in Washington over Axis influence among school children, some Latin American countries were already taking action to curb Axis activity in national classrooms. Brazil took the lead. There, Getulio Vargas came to power via a military coup in 1930, promised democracy but ruled by decree, and assumed authoritarian control by 1937. While flirting with fascist models and implementing a corporatist state, Vargas' *Estado Novo* [New State] eventually rejected European fascism and gradually embraced inter-American solidarity. As war developed, Vargas joined the Allied cause, and Brazil was the only independent Latin American nation to send troops to fight in Europe.

As in Colombia, education reform was at the center of Vargas' vision of modernity. Like Liberals in Colombia, Vargas privileged classrooms as laboratories of nationalism and worked to extend federal control over them. Free public education had been mandated during the early nineteenth century, but a century later few Brazilians were receiving it. As little as 39% of the school-age population attended primary schools in 1930 and a significantly lower number actually completed it. Public secondary schools were few in number, but private schools were more plentiful and outnumbered public

⁴³ US Department of State, *The Cultural Cooperation Program 1938-1943*, Publication 2137 (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1944), p. 29.

schools by a ratio of 4:1. Similar to Colombia, many of these private schools were run by religious orders, but Brazil had many community-based private schools functioning in immigrant settlements where foreign languages rather than Portuguese were the medium of instruction.⁴⁴ It was Vargas' efforts to federalize these schools and institute a national curriculum that first drew Washington's attention to Axis education in the Latin America.

Vargas' decrees placed heavy restrictions on foreign schools and immigrant communities in general. One law, banning the use of foreign languages in public and private schools, greatly affected Italian, German, Polish, and Japanese immigrant populations. German immigrant schools alone, concentrated in Southern Brazil, numbered 2,500 in 1937. Targeting areas where immigrant populations had been resistant to speaking Portuguese and unwilling to acculturate into Brazilian society, the new law was a function of Vargas' ongoing campaign to establish unifying Brazilian identity via government-imposed nationalism. But having faced a coup attempt by Brazilian fascists months earlier, it was equally an attempt to contain what he perceived as a growing foreign threat to Brazil from European fascists.

Vargas' moves to crack down against foreign influence were accelerated after the absorption of Austria by Nazi Germany. Fearful of the territorial ambitions of Hitler and questioning the allegiance of Brazil's German population, Vargas and his appointed

⁴⁴ *Sinopse Estatística do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Serviço Gráfico do Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 1947), p. 221; Department of Press and Propaganda, *Facts and Information About Brazil* (Rio de Janeiro: Indústria do Livro, Ltd., 1942), pp. 36-46; *Outline of Education in Brazil*, Instituto Nacional de Estudos Pedagógicos (New York: Brazilian Government Trade Bureau, 1947); George M. Butler, "The Progress of Education in Brazil," *School and Society* 53, no.1378 (May 24, 1941), pp. 657-660; R.S. Rose, *One of the Forgotten Things: Getulio Vargas and Brazilian Social Control, 1930-1954* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2000), p. xvi. Most historians agree that Vargas-era education reforms never reached the Brazilian masses. Yet, there were substantial increases in the number of public schools and in their enrollments. For a critical view of Vargas' education policy see Robert Levine, *The Vargas Regime: The Critical Years, 1934-38* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970) and Rose, *One of the Forgotten Things*.

regional governors began an assault on “sources” of foreign propaganda. In the powerful southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, the federal government began to take over “suspect” private schools in February of 1938 -declaring that the children of immigrants born in Brazil “are Brazilian and must be educated as such.”⁴⁵ A subsequent law in that state forbid “foreign governments and foreign associations” from subsidizing schools “in any way.”⁴⁶ On the national level, new laws banned non-Brazilian flags, insignia, and uniforms in schools and clubs; they allowed censorship of reporting and commentary by the foreign press; and they restricted Brazilians from joining foreign social organizations.⁴⁷

After a coup attempt in May 1938, Vargas communicated to FDR that “advocates of foreign doctrines attempted a coup against Brazilian democracy,” and he provided the US with incentive for initiating its own campaign against Axis influence in Brazil.⁴⁸ As the new US program of cultural diplomacy was then emerging, Brazil became the initial focus. In June of 1938, Secretary Hull announced the campaign directly to the Brazilian people; in a statement read over Brazilian radio he made a plea for cooperation to arrest Axis influence. He indicated that schools had an important role to play in the campaign:

*These cooperative efforts must be made not only by statesmen and diplomats, by business and commercial men of the countries in the Western Hemisphere but also by educational institutions, which can be such a powerful factor in influencing public opinion to achieve these influences.*⁴⁹

⁴⁵ “Brazilian State Bans Foreigners’ Schools: Rio Grande do Sul takes Over Private Institutions,” *NYT*, 30 Feb. 1938; “Brazil is Anxious for US Help,” *NYT*, 1 July 1940.

⁴⁶ “Curb on Nazism in Brazil,” *NYT*, 10 April 1938.

⁴⁷ “Foreign Propaganda is Banned in Brazil,” *NYT*, 20 April 1938.

⁴⁸ Gertulio Vargas to FDR, 14 May 1938, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers 1938, Volume V – The American Republics* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1954), p. 415.

⁴⁹ “Hull Makes Plea for Cooperation: Statement Read on his Behalf in Radio Program for Brazil Stresses Cultural Ties,” *NYT*, 14 June 1938, p. 1.

At the same time, other Latin American governments began mounting their own crack downs on Axis schools. In Argentina, concern for Nazi influence in the late 1930s led to a government investigation of German and Italian community schools. German schools proved to be of greater concern because German immigrants, as compared to Italians, assimilated less into the national culture. The final investigative report charged that the Association of German Teachers in Argentina had been formed under the direction of Berlin in 1936 and was subsequently used as a vehicle for ensuring loyalty to Germany and Hitler. Citing examples of directors of German schools in Argentina being first approved by Berlin, the report argued that some schools were submitting to Hitler. More alarming to Argentine nationalists was the content of school textbooks which canonized Hitler, instructed children to practice the Nazi salute daily, and emphasized that the German race was superior to all others. In Buenos Aires, phrases culled from such texts were interpreted as a Nazi assault on Argentine nationalism and sovereignty.⁵⁰ In reaction to the report, the Argentine Congress instituted tighter control over foreign schools which included new requirements that the national curriculum be taught in Spanish. Strict new regulatory processes were implemented for all foreign schools. As a result, many Axis-oriented schools in Argentina were forced to close. Existing US-sponsored schools were required to comply with the new regulations in Argentina as they were with similar regulations enacted throughout the hemisphere during the course of the war. Significantly (and as the Colombian case will demonstrate) the quality of these schools' academic programs improved under the new regulations. Providing a standard

⁵⁰ The Colombian government kept abreast of developments in Argentine schools via its legation in Buenos Aires. Colombian Legation/Buenos Aires to the Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores/Bogotá (hereafter MRREE), 1941, "Actividades Nazi: 1941," 175/22/82 (box/folder/page), Archivo del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (hereafter AMRE), Archivo General de la Nación, Bogotá, Colombia (henceforth AGN); "Argentina Will Open Nazi Probe," *NYT*, 8 July 1939, p. 4; "Nazis in Argentina Accused on Schools," *NYT*, 30 Sept. 1941, p. 18.

US-style program on top of the required national curriculum, many of these schools developed rigorous academic programs that proved attractive to families of the upper class.⁵¹

The nationalization and closings of Axis schools in Brazil and Argentina received substantial attention in Washington and in the US press, particularly the more numerous German schools. As the backlash against Axis schools spread across the region in the early years of the war in Europe, news of Nazi schools continued to fill newspapers and radio broadcasts in the US. Among the cases noted were the forced closures of three private German schools in Uruguay (for having “a Nazi political tinge”), the shutdown of all German schools and social clubs in Guatemala in 1941, Chilean “curbs” on Nazi schools, and a proposed educational “clean up” in Colombia “to eliminate totalitarian influence in all schools.”⁵² While the US press praised Latin American efforts to suppress Nazi influence in classrooms, such reporting also fueled increased anxiety in the US; headlines seemed to confirm that a “fifth column” was indeed forming south of the Rio Grande. That schools were Axis laboratories was widely accepted, and when the Corry report was later released, it gave statistical foundation to these fears. And US diplomatic pressure on Latin American governments to act decisively against Nazism increased.

Schools were just one element of “fifth column” alarm in the US press and government before the US entered the war. Another important focus, and one that had direct bearing on Colombia, was the threat of Nazi sabotage to the Panama Canal.

Reflecting the high priority Washington placed on its protection, substantial US press

⁵¹ For an Argentine example see R. L. Amsden, “American Schools Make ‘Good Neighbors’ Better,” *Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-Schools Principals* 26, no. 110 (December 1942), pp. 77-82.

⁵² “Uruguay Closes Nazi School,” *NYT*, 15 Feb. 1941; “Guatemala Closes Nazi Schools,” *NYT*, 18 Dec. 1941; “Chile Hits Nazi Teaching,” *NYT*, 22 April 1939; Colombia to Clean Up Schools,” *NYT*, 20 Aug. 1941.

coverage emphasized the vulnerability of the canal to Nazi infiltration. Press attention to the German presence in nations surrounding Panama was also constant.⁵³ The Colombian legation in Washington, ever sensitive to canal-related issues, monitored allegations in the US press and kept Bogotá informed of the growing sensationalism in reporting.⁵⁴ Soon, Washington was redoubling its efforts against Nazism in the nations surrounding Panama, and, thus, was significant energy expended convincing the Colombian government that protection of the canal was in its best interests.⁵⁵ US diplomatic pressure to deport suspected Nazis sympathizers, close German schools and clubs, and shut-down German-owned business was forceful, but it met a largely positive reception.⁵⁶ US Oil interests in Colombia also pressured Bogotá on the Nazi sabotage issue; the Minister of War reported that two US companies, Tropical Oil and the Andian Corporation were “beginning to get alarmed” [*empezando a alarmarse*] and they wanted Colombian military protection against the threat of sabotage. The companies emphasized the importance of Colombian petroleum to the fuel supply of the allies.⁵⁷

US pressure on the Liberal government in Bogotá to support the allied cause and arrest German influence was balanced by calls from the far right of the Conservative party to remain neutral. From that extreme right, demands for Colombian neutrality were

⁵³ For the Colombian case, see “Colombian Nazis Promise Seizure of the Panama Canal,” *NYT*, 16 June 1940; “Nazi Propaganda Rife in Colombia,” *NYT*, 16 June 1940; Russell B. Porter, “Colombia’s Nazis Armed for Attack,” *NYT*, 18 Aug. 1940.

⁵⁴ Colombian Embassy in Washington to MRREE, Communiqué 574, 25 June 1940, “Actividades Nazi: 1940 Enero-Julio,” 169/21/40-53, AMRE, AGN; Colombian Embassy in Washington to MRREE, 1 July 1940, “Actividades Nazi: 1940 Enero-Julio,” 169/21/60, AMRE, AGN; Colombian Consulate/ New York City to MRREE, 19 Aug. 1940, “Actividades Nazi: 1940 Agosto-Septiembre,” 170/21/77, AMRE, AGN; Colombian Embassy in Washington to MRREE, No. 1011, 27 Nov. 1940, “Actividades Nazi: 1940 Nov-Dic,” 172/22/140, AMRE, AGN.

⁵⁵ David Bushnell, *Eduardo Santos and the Good Neighbor, 1938-1942* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1967), pp. 29-38.

⁵⁶ Freidman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors*, pp. 95-100.

⁵⁷ Jose Joaquin Castro M. to Sr. Lopez de Mesa, 29 May 1940, “Actividades Nazi: 1940 Enero-Julio,” 169/21/23, AMRE, AGN.

often infused with anti-imperialist rhetoric and open expressions of sympathy for Germany: “Colombians! Do not forget that Germany was the last free country that recognized Panama as an independent republic.”⁵⁸ From fringe elements, but a limited number of mainstream Conservatives as well, came great rhetorical resistance to Pan American unity that invigorated political discourse of Hispanidad.⁵⁹

It is clear that Bogotá and the Colombian people were also on the receiving end of German pressure to reject the Allied cause. Substantial Nazi propaganda material was in circulation in Bogotá before Colombia broke diplomatic relations with Berlin in late 1941. Pamphlets collected by the Ministry of Foreign Relations reveal that the best print-quality Nazi propaganda materials then circulating in Bogotá were printed in either Buenos Aires or Madrid.⁶⁰ But locally printed materials were also common and usually more precisely crafted toward convincing locals that Germany and Colombia shared long-term friendship or that both nations had benefited from their developing economic ties.⁶¹ Anti-imperialism was a common theme in these pamphlets, but before the US entered the war the British government was the more frequent target of this type of German attack. That locally printed anti-British materials were circulating among university students proved most troubling to British diplomats.⁶²

As the US edged closer to official engagement in the war, the Colombian legation in Berlin noted shifting attention in Nazi propaganda to US imperialism that gave

⁵⁸ Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario, Press Release, 1941, “Actividades Nazi: 1940 Nov-Dic,” 172/22/318, AMRE, AGN.

⁵⁹ Bushnell, *Eduardo Santos and the Good Neighbor, 1938-1942*, pp. 25-27.

⁶⁰ See the collection of Nazi propaganda circulated in Bogotá from 1937-1940 in “Propaganda Activities Nazi 1937-1940,” 184/23/1-11, AMRE, AGN.

⁶¹ “Datos Significativos Sobre Comercio Colombo-Alemán” (Bogotá: 1940), “Actividades Nazi: 1940 Agosto-Septiembre,” 170/21/90, AMRE, AGN.

⁶² M. Paske Smith to Don Alberto Gonzalez Fernandez, 20 Aug. 1940, “Actividades Nazi: 1940 Agosto-Septiembre,” 170/21/91, AMRE, AGN; British Legation to Don Alberto Gonzalez Fernandez, undated, “Actividades Nazi: 1940 Agosto-Septiembre,” 170/21/99, AMRE, AGN.

particular focus to the Panama Canal.⁶³ According to Bogotá's representative in Berlin, Nazi press and radio were preparing the German public for Latin America's eventual rupture of relations with them; acknowledging that efforts at inter-American solidarity against the Axis had been largely successful, the German press continuously focused on the "pressure, as much economic as political, that the United States exercises over South America" so as to suggest that Latin American nations could not act on their own accord.⁶⁴ In the immediate aftermath of Pearl Harbor, two weeks before Colombia would formally break relations with Germany, it issued a stern warning to Berlin that Colombia would "impede, by all possible measures, direct or indirect threats to the security of the Panama Canal from Colombian territory" as well as other acts against American solidarity.⁶⁵

Closure of German Schools in Colombia

Excepting the immigrants proceeding from neighboring countries, the number of foreign-born residents in Colombia was statistically insignificant through the early 1900s, and this absence reflected the failure of nineteenth and early twentieth century government attempts to encourage large-scale European immigration. Just over one-half of 1% of the national population was foreign, and approximately half of that figure was Latin American nationals.⁶⁶ Still, small groups of immigrants, both permanent

⁶³ Santiago López (Colombian Legation in Berlin) to German Foreign Minister, 28 Oct. 1941, "Legación de Colombia en Alemania – Berlin: 1941-42," 20/03/119, AMRE/Diplomático y Consular (hereafter AMRE/DC), AGN.

⁶⁴ "Ya por la prensa y por el radio se hace mucha mención de la presión, tanto económica como política, que los Estados Unidos ejercen sobre Sudamérica..." Santiago López to MRREE, Nov. 1941, "Legación of Colombia en Alemania – Berlin: 1941-42," 20/03/135, AMRE/DC, AGN.

⁶⁵ "...impeder por todos los medios que pueda ser amenazada directo o indirectamente desde tierras colombianas la seguridad del Canal de Panamá..." MRREE to German Legation/Bogotá, 9 Dec. 1941, "Legación de Colombia en Alemania – Berlin: 1941-42," 09/67/100, AMRE/DC, AGN.

⁶⁶ "Nacionalidad y estado civil de los habitantes," Cuadro 61, *Censo General de Poblacion: 5 de Julio de 1938*, p. 143.

and temporary, did arrive from the Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and North America, and if their influence was not well pronounced nationally it was stronger at the regional level. In the cases of German, Italian, English, French and US citizens, many arrived in Colombia as trained professionals, engineers, technicians, or merchants. Colombian historiography specifically credits these foreign nationals with a disproportionate and “undeniable” role in the development and modernization of national infrastructure of communication, transportation, and education along with a key role in the growth of commerce and industry.⁶⁷ By the 1930s, the greatest concentrations of these immigrant populations were in and around Barranquilla, the Caribbean coast in general, and Andean Bogotá. The Santander region in the northeast reaches of Andes was convenient to the petroleum fields and so it also attracted nationals from these countries. Medellín, with a regionally strong economy built both on coffee profits and a well-developed textile industry, attracted some of these immigrants as well.

Given the relatively low figures of foreign immigration, Colombia did not have an extensive problem with Axis-oriented schools during the rise of European fascism. Where the few German-founded schools existed, they were very well-regarded and patronized by the Colombian upper class. Logically, prominent German schools existed in Bogotá and Barranquilla; two smaller schools, in Medellín and Cali, had strong connections with German education as a result of the German pedagogical mission of the 1920s. These four schools, like many in Brazil, Argentina, Guatemala and elsewhere, were forced to close during the war as Nazi political activity received government, press, and Allied attention. Comparatively, Italian schools in Colombia were Catholic schools

⁶⁷ Rodrigo de J. Garcia Estrada, *Los Extranjeros en Colombia* (Bogotá: Planeta, 2006); Posada-Carbó, *The Colombian Caribbean*.

that were founded and staffed by Italian religious orders. There were more of them, but they received less scrutiny and faced fewer restrictions. Japanese populations in Colombia were so small --a total of 233 individuals in 1938 were concentrated in two areas along the Pacific coast-- that they did not have formal schools.⁶⁸

After Pearl Harbor, US pressure on Latin America to control resident Axis nationals increased dramatically. As the Cory report demonstrates, Washington assumed that every ethnic German in Latin America was sympathetic to the Nazis. Combined with a lack of confidence in Latin American governments' abilities to deal effectively with fifth column threats, this sentiment drove a strong current of diplomatic pressure, emanating from US embassies, legations, and consular offices, to clamp down on Axis-affiliated businesses, political activities, schools, and social clubs. One important pressure tool was the "Proclaimed List of Certain Blocked Nationals" which identified Axis-sympathetic individuals in Latin America with whom US citizens and businesses abroad were barred from dealing. Many "blocked" individuals ended up on deportation lists provided to national governments by US embassies. Friedman's study of the deportation of German nationals from Latin America shows that many innocents fell victim to the fifth column hysteria that characterized Washington's diplomacy in most Latin American capitals.⁶⁹ Yet, as the Brazilian case reveals, Latin American action against Axis influence was not reducible to Washington's pressure.

Indeed, the hierarchy of the Colombian Catholic Church placed significant pressure on the ruling Liberals to stop Nazi activity among school children. Though the Church's hegemony over education in private secondary schools was diminishing under

⁶⁸ "Nacionalidad, por sección del país y sexo," Cuadro 62, *Censo General de Población: 5 de Julio de 1938*, p. 149.

⁶⁹ Friedman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors*, p. 229.

Liberal reforms, priests and nuns regularly worked as teachers in private non-Catholic schools to satisfy the extant legal requirement that all Catholic students be provided with religious instruction. In Bogotá, the Chaplain of the Foreign Catholics, a priest and a German national, provided religious instruction in the Colegio Alemán de Bogotá [the German School of Bogotá]. His report to the Papal Nuncio, the Archbishop of Bogotá and the church hierarchy was presented to the Ministry of Foreign Relations in a call to stop Nazi and German Protestant abuses in Colombian classrooms. Father Richard Struve Haker's assessment of the "Nazification" of the Colegio Alemán provides an important, if somewhat biased, window into the Axis influence in the German schools of Colombia. According to Struve Haker, the Colegio Alemán de Bogotá began to receive direct funding from Berlin in the late 1930s; in exchange, the school forfeited the right to select and hire its own teachers. New teachers arriving from Germany were all members of the Nazi party. Gradually, Nazism became more prominent in the colegio among the teachers, parents of the school association, and the *junta directiva*. As this happened, the Catholic priest began to have problems at the school.

*Letters demanded that I give the Nazi salute and sing the Nazi song of Horst-Wessel-Lied in order to enter the school, which I refused to do because the salute and song are anti-Christian. Nazi propaganda among the German children resulted in the formation of two youth organizations, among the Colombian children there was effective propaganda ...*⁷⁰

Before it was closed by government decree in 1942, the student body of the Colegio Alemán de Bogotá was 75% Colombian. It served the upper class of the capital and was

⁷⁰ "Los documentos de la correspondencia exigieron de mí como condición de la admisión el saludo nacistá y el canto nacistá del Horst-Wessel-Lied que niego yo por ser saludo y canto anticristianos. La propaganda nacistá entre los niños alemanes tuvo como consecuencia la formación de los dos organizaciones juveniles, entre los niños colombianos se hace propaganda efectiva..." Richard Struve Haker, "Resumen de la Situación Actual, dado hacia fines de Julio de 1940, a los excmos. Señores Arzobispos, Obispos, y al Excmo. Señor Nuncio Apostólico por el Pbro. Ricardo Struve Haker, Capellan de los extranjeros Católico en Bogotá," July 1940, "Actividades Nazi: 1940," 169/21/120, AMRE, AGN.

considered among the best secondary institutions in the city.⁷¹ Father Richard observed that an initial negative reaction to Nazi activity by some of the more influential Colombian families forced the administrators and teachers to proceed cautiously.

Above all, the priest and his superiors were most concerned about the assault on Catholicism within the classrooms. The priest alleged that the professor of Protestant religion was a strong Nazi party member who had told students that their Catholic priest-professor “did not speak in historic truths” [*no versaba de verdades historicas*]. Worse, Catholic religious classes were regularly cancelled by the school; the scheduled hours were instead used for Nazi indoctrination through singing, ceremonies, and festivals. It reached the point where children were not sent for Catholic religious classes.⁷²

A portion of the student body of the school was children of German Jews who had fled Germany only to encounter Nazism within their new educational community. Members of the Anti-Nazi Freedom Movement, a Bogotá based organization which fought Nazi activities in Colombia and was led by Jewish refugees, actively resisted the Nazification of Colegio Alemán from their seats on the school’s board of directors. From within the colegio, both Jewish and Catholic parents were initially successful in mounting opposition to the Nazi movement, but German victories in Europe worked against them:

Until recently, there had been strong openly anti-Nazi currents in the colegio which limited the professors from spreading propaganda beyond the German children organized as Hitler Youth. It was precisely the anti-Nazi activity of Klein and Herrnstadt that the colegio recognized and feared, as Klein had slowed down the Nazification of the schools through organized opposition to the establishment of a board of directors composed of Nazis, while Herrnstadt was known to

⁷¹ Dr. Herrnstadt and Dr. Klein to Anti-Nazi Freedom Movement, 13 May 1942, “Actividades Nazi:1941, Julio-Diciembre,” 176/22/235, AMRE, AGN.

⁷² Richard Struve Haker, “Resumen de la Situación Actual.”

*impede, through his protests, the spreading of propaganda –even clandestine propaganda-- in his daughter’s class.*⁷³

Some members of the school community lobbied for Colombian government intervention to prevent a Nazi takeover of the school, and other members served as informants to the National Police and US Embassy.⁷⁴

In Barranquilla, the local Colegio Alemán was founded in 1912 to serve a growing German population. By the 1930s, before Nazification began, it was, like its sister school in Bogotá, highly-regarded among the upper class. However, the German population on the coast was more prominent and influential, and, thus, the colegio had a more dominant position on the local education stage than the school in Bogotá. The German language was emphasized in the academic program. By 1940, the locally-established school received financial subsidizes, materials and teachers from Berlin. Like the school in Bogotá, it came to fit the “collaborationist” model identified in the Corry report. The student body was comprised of 253 students of whom only 26% were German nationals, the children of recent immigrants or resident businessmen; 65% of the students were Colombian citizens but many of them were of German and mixed German-Colombian ancestry. Reflecting the quality of the school and its attractiveness to parents,

⁷³ “Hasta el ultimo momento habia en el colegio fuertes circulos abiertamente antinazistas, los cuales impidieron que los profesores extendieran su propaganda mas alla del sector de los niños alemanes organizados en el Juventud Hitlerista. Era precisamente la actividad antinazista de Klein y Herrnstadt la que se conocia y se temia en el colegio, ya que Klein habia orgnizado la oposición contra el establecimiento de una junta directive compuesta de Nazis, retardando asi la nazicación, mientras que Herrnstadt supo impedir con sus protestas que se hiciera propaganda alguna, ni siquiera clandestine, en la clase en que se encontraba su hija.” Dr. Herrnstadt and Dr. Klein to Anti-Nazi Freedom Movement, 13 May 1942.

⁷⁴ Dr. B. Mendel to Anti-Nazi Freedom Movement, 6 May 1942, “Actividades Nazi: 1943, Abril-Junio,” 176/22/194, AMRE, AGN; B. Mendel to Señores of the Anti-Nazi Freedom Movement, 1942, “Actividades Nazi: 1941, Julio-Diciembre,” 176/22/198, AMRE, AGN; Friedman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors*, pp. 71-73. The Anti-Nazi Freedom Movement became bogged down in infighting over differences in tactics and was eventually outlawed by the Colombian government. In the suspicious climate of the day, personal animosities developed within the organization that prejudiced the quality of information provided to Colombian and US officials about the German community in Colombia.

9% of the student body was children of third-country nationals who resided in the city.⁷⁵

Historically, US children were among those attending the school. Indicative of its popularity (and the demand for quality secondary education in Colombia), student turnover was very low and new students were only accepted for kindergarten and the first year.⁷⁶

In Barranquilla, the Colegio Alemán was joined by the Club Alemán, a popular German social club, as an important cultural center in the city. Throughout the 1930s and through the end of 1941, social events held at both institutions filled the *páginas de sociedad* [society pages] in the local press. Even as banner front-page headlines began to detail German aggression against Czechoslovakia, Poland, Belgium, and France, formal dances, concerts, and festivals at the club and school were chronicled or advertised on the society pages in both Spanish and German.⁷⁷

At Barranquilla in 1919 Germans aviators and Colombian investors had founded the oldest commercial airline in South America, SCADTA (the Colombian-German Aero Transport Society). Given Colombia's topography and the great travel distances between population centers, the establishment of regular air service was immediately successful and it became a tremendous source of pride in Barranquilla (and around the nation).⁷⁸

SCADTA tied the city to modernity by connecting it to the world. For the accomplishments of SCADTA's German management and personnel, *Barranquilleros* extended immigrant Germans much goodwill. As internal and international flights

⁷⁵ Colegio Alemán de Barranquilla, "Historia del Colegio Alemán de Barranquilla," <http://www.Colegioaleman.edu.co/English/enacerca-Historia.html> [accessed October 10, 2007].

⁷⁶ Advertisement, "Colegio Alemán," *El Herald* (Barranquilla), 1 Sept. 1938.

⁷⁷ German school and club activities were prominent almost daily on the society pages ["De Sociedad"] pages of Barranquilla's *El Herald* during this period. See for example *El Herald*, 1 Sept. 1938.

⁷⁸ There were riots in Barranquilla when Avianca (formerly SCADTA) attempted to move its headquarters to Bogotá in 1942. Posada-Carbó, *The Colombian Caribbean*, p. 177.

increased through the 1930s, however, the Colombian government recognized the growing value of air transport as a vehicle for national integration and modernization. At the end of his first term, President López moved to establish greater Colombian control over SCADTA. Reflecting Colombia's historically moderate approach to economic nationalism, he aimed to establish a 51% share in the airline among Colombian nationals. Washington applauded the move but remained concerned that German and Austrian pilots continued to fly the company's air fleet. Fears that experienced German pilots might take marching orders from Berlin and bomb the Panama Canal produced strong US pressure on Bogotá to remove German pilots and administrators from the company. US-based Pan American Airlines actually owned a majority share in the company and this facilitated diplomatic maneuvering that led to the nationalization of the airline, the removal of German pilots, and the creation of Avianca, Colombia's national airline.⁷⁹ The example of the Colombianization of SCADTA underscores that US and Colombian economic and political objectives often converged. It is a reminder that US diplomatic pressure in Latin America must be critically assessed in relation to objectives of national governments in order not to overstate the significance of US pressure.

A key turning point in Colombian tolerance of school Nazification came with the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941. Colombia had early embraced the US-led efforts for inter-American unity against Axis aggression, and after the war came to the Americas via Hawaii, Colombia called on all of the other American republics to collectively break relations with the Axis powers. President Eduardo Santos gave unwavering support to the Allied powers; acknowledging how crucial the Panama Canal would become in a two-theater war, he even agreed that a US presence on Colombian soil

⁷⁹ Bushnell, *Eduardo Santos and the Good Neighbor, 1938-1942*, pp. 18-23.

might become necessary to protect the isthmus. Liberals and many Conservatives supported Santos' alignment with the Allies, though some prominent Conservatives preferred neutrality and made much of the issue in attempts to gain political advantage. The day after Pearl Harbor, and in line with many Latin American countries, Colombia immediately broke relations with Japan. Shortly thereafter, it did the same with Germany and Italy. In the wake of these diplomatic declarations, new powers were granted to the National Police allowing the dismantling of organizations and clubs whose activities threatened national sovereignty. Police were also granted control over the internal movements of foreigners, including the power to detain and relocate them. A full declaration of war against Germany came in June 1942, when a German submarine sunk the *Resolute*, a Colombian ship en route from Colombia's Caribbean islands of San Andres and Providencia. After abandoning the sinking vessel, the defenseless crew was gunned down by the Germans as they drifted on a life raft.⁸⁰

Adding to existing pressure from the Church, anti-Nazi German refugees, pro-Ally Colombians, and the US embassy, powerful photographic evidence of Nazi indoctrination activities on Colombian soil was presented to the directors of the National Police by their Barranquilla branch. Found during a house raid, three dozen photographs of ceremonies at the Colegio Alemán and Club Alemán in Barranquilla revealed that Nazi pomp was at home on the Caribbean coast. In the photos, Nazi swastikas and flags adorned ceremonial stages. Uniformed party members stood before crowds that included children. Everyone gave the Nazi salute.⁸¹ An accompanying report charged that other Nazi political activities observed clandestinely in schools and clubs were compromising

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 103-120.

⁸¹ Photographs, Police Directorship/Barranquilla to the Director of the National Police, 13 Jan. 1942, "Actividades Nazi: 1942, Enero," 176/22/13-47, AMRE, AGN.

national security. Outlining the structure of the Nazi organization in Colombia and comparing it to a Communist organization, the report identified a hierarchical command that flowed down from the Office of Foreigners in Berlin (the *Auslandsorganisation*) to national and then local groups and finally to secret political cells. Explaining the weight of the pressure applied by Nazis on German immigrants in Colombia, the report noted that since 1936 German social clubs had expelled any member who did not belong to the party. Indicative of the contemporary popularization of radio technology, the report also alleged that since the breaking of relations with Germany the month before, clandestine radio had been used to communicate with Nazi sympathizers in rural areas of the nation; “they have installed speakers with the aim of providing the public with news that broadcasters in Berlin produce in Spanish.”⁸²

The Nazification of the Colegio Alemán was especially alarming to the police. Reflecting a commonly held belief in the transformative power of education and concern over abuse of that power, they charged that indoctrination in the school was so effective that students “became true followers of Hitler’s creed” [*se tornan en veraderos adeptos del credo hitlerista*]. Similar to the Bogotá case chronicled by the Church and parents, professors in Barranquilla had been fired and replaced with Nazis. Free tuition was offered to families of German descent who could not afford the colegio and “in this way the home was conquered through the school” [*en esa forma se conquistaba el hogar por medio de la escuela*]. Children whose parents were part of local, regional, or national government were also offered free tuition. Describing the ceremony celebrating the first of May at Colegio Alemán, the report compared it to the best ceremonies in Munich,

⁸² “...han instalado altoparlantes con el fin de dar al public las noticias que en castellaño publican las emisoras de Berlin...” Police Directorship/Barranquilla to Director of the National Police, 13 Jan. 1942, “Actividades Nazi: 1942, Enero,” 176/22/1-12, AMRE, AGN.

Hamburg, or Cologne with the red flags, Nazi crosses, and uniforms received directly from the German military. To the police, themselves men of uniform, the brown Nazi uniforms that had been smuggled into the country were an affront to Colombian sovereignty, and they demanded aggressive action by Bogotá to eliminate the threat.⁸³

The month after Pearl Harbor and the *rompimiento* [the “break” in relations with Axis powers], the Colombian Ministry of National Education acted on the police report and imposed new restrictions on all schools within Colombia. While German schools were the immediate target of Decree 91 of 1942 (January 21), the new regulations of the ministry applied to all schools in the nation. As such, the decree should be seen broadly in the context of Liberal education reforms rather than as a simple reaction to Nazi propaganda activity. The goal of national unity and the integration of the disjointed nation through education --a central tenet of the Liberal reform program-- underpinned the new regulations. Colombian schools, the decree asserted, “must serve in the first order the interests and ideals of the Colombian nation” and “form citizens that jealously guard the ideals of the patria and are capable of serving it.” The primary function of schools was defined as the teaching of the language, history, geography and civics of Colombia. Spanish was to have preference in all institutions, and while foreign languages were recognized as important, they were defined as auxiliary. Strikingly absent in the school subject prioritization in the decree was any reference to religious instruction and Catholic dogma; in many ways, the decree reinforced earlier constitutional changes that had controversially signaled the end of Church hegemony over education.

Specifically addressing schools founded and operated by foreigners, the new restrictions banned school names that “suggest affiliation with a foreign country.” The

⁸³ Ibid.

Colegio Alemán de Barranquilla, for example, violated that new mandate. The name of the popular school sponsored by US Presbyterians in the same city, Colegio Americano [the American School] was originally chosen in the nineteenth century to suggest affiliation with the US, but because the Spanish term *Americano* could be interpreted more broadly to include everyone in the Americas, its name did not violate the new law. Exceptions were made for official establishments named in honor of an allied, neighboring or friendly country by national, regional, or local governments. In addition, busts, sculptures, or portraits of foreign heads of state were banned. Exception was made for just one leader of a foreign nation, “His Holiness the Pope.” And no singing of the national hymns of foreign nations was allowed unless it was at a school ceremony honoring an ally on their national day. Finally, in terms of academic programs within schools operated by foreigners, the decree now required that Colombian history, civics, geography and literature be taught in schools. And most importantly, these subjects had to be taught by Colombians and exactly follow Ministry of Education curriculum guidelines.⁸⁴ Importantly, while Decree 91 of 1942 was specifically formulated as a measure to arrest Axis influence in the schools, given that so many Colombian secondary schools were founded, operated and staffed by foreign-born Catholic priests, brothers, and nuns, the decree strengthened the Ministry of Education’s authority vis-à-vis the Church and its foreign-born educators.

The decree did not specify sanctions for violations of the new regulations, but it encouraged the reporting of breaches. The first major sanctions came just days after the decree was issued when the closings of the German schools at Bogotá and Barranquilla

⁸⁴ “Disposiciones sobre el funcionamiento de establecimientos de educación,” Decree Number 91 of 1942, *Diario Oficial -1942, Primero Trimestre*, copy in “Actividades Nazi: 1942, Enero,” 176/22/1, AMRE, AGN.

were ordered by the Ministry of National Education.⁸⁵ In its official statement, the ministry said these schools attacked the essence of Colombian nationality and attempted “to form a spirit among youth that is in open rebellion with national sentiment.”⁸⁶ Two schools in Cali and Medellín with connections to German educators were closed in the following months. Germán Arciniegas, Colombia’s Minister of National Education at the time of the first closures, later told the *New York Times* that

*even the parents of the students...had believed their sons were merely studying the German language when as a matter of fact, they wore uniforms and German swastikas and were drilled in the tactics of the Nazis.*⁸⁷

Comparatively, schools serving Italian immigrants in Colombia were almost all Catholic schools staffed by Italian religious orders and none were closed. In Barranquilla, the community of Italian nationals was three times greater in number than the German community, and Italians were second only to Spaniards as the largest foreign national grouping in the city. (There were just slightly more Italians than Syrio-Lebanese and five times as many Italian as US citizens.) The National Police section in Barranquilla monitored the activities of Italians along with Germans on the coast. And when individuals were connected with German or Italian schools or clubs --as a board members or financial officers, for example-- they were more likely to be labeled *peligroso* [dangerous] in police reports submitted to the Office of Foreigners. Still, such reports also reveal that a large percentage of Italians on the coast were Catholic men married to

⁸⁵ “Dos Colegios Alemanes Serán Clausurados Pronto,” *Diario del Caribe* (Barranquilla), 22 Jan. 1942.

⁸⁶ “Clausurado los colegios alemanes por el gobierno,” *El Heraldo* (Barranquilla), 24 Jan. 1942.

⁸⁷ “Calmer Outlook on Latins is Asked,” *NYT*, 22 Sept. 1942.

Colombian women, and, overall, they were less likely to be deemed dangerous and qualify for deportation or detention.⁸⁸

In Barranquilla and Bogotá, the closure of the German schools left parents and students in a difficult position. Elite Colombian families, who were the majority in these school communities, acted swiftly to place their sons and daughters in other private schools, but classrooms were a limited commodity in Colombia and placement of Colegio Alemán students in other schools was not guaranteed. The two tiny, independent US-sponsored schools in Bogotá and Barranquilla found new demand for their services, but these schools were then primary-only institutions. In Barranquilla, non-Nazi educators and former teachers from the German school quickly organized a new colegio to serve the community's needs. Taking advantage of the furniture and resources of the closed colegio, the Colegio del Prado opened under a Colombian director within three weeks. The school program was quickly approved by Colombia's Ministry of National Education.⁸⁹ Interestingly, as German influence declined in the city with the closing of the popular school, the new Colegio de Prado was established in a modern neighborhood that had been built by US nationals and was popular with the local elite.

Funding American Schools: A Permanent Program Takes Shape

In 1940, the *New York Times* reported that tuition in Ecuador's German and Italian schools "has been nominal and sometimes free." Highlighting growing anti-Axis sentiment in that nation's capital, the paper detailed the effort by Ecuador's former

⁸⁸ National Police /Barranquilla, "Actividades Nazi: 1943, Abril-Junio," 180/23/126, AMRE, AGN; Jose Maria Barrios Trujillo, National Police, to Guillermo Guzman Gratz, Office of Foreigners, 12 Jan. 1943, "Actividades Nazi: 1943, Enero-Junio," 180/23/20, AMRE, AGN; Acta #1 (Minutes of Board Meeting #1), National Police /Barranquilla Official Board for the Control of Foreigners, 4 Jan. 1943, "Actividades Nazi: 1943, Enero-Junio," 180/23/2, AMRE, AGN.

⁸⁹ "Nuevo Colegio," *El Herald* (Barranquilla), 26 Jan. 1942; "Se Abrirá un Nuevo Colegio," *El Herald* (Barranquilla), 28 Jan. 1942; Advertisement, "Colegio del Prado," *El Herald* (Barranquilla), 4 Feb. 1942.

Minister of War to establish an “American” school in Quito. A committed Pan Americanist, the minister believed a US-type school would help counter the influence of the Axis powers among upper-class *Quiteños*. The *New York Times* acknowledge the valuable double function schools like the colegio in Quito could play: “not only will this school fill a very important need [demand for US-style education among US and Ecuadorans], but it will also become a new link in the program of closer relations between the United States and this country.”⁹⁰ When the school opened that same year, it received no “official” financial backing from the United States government and it was struggling; founded by a foreign national, it was technically not even a US-sponsored school. Later congressional testimony, however, revealed that the US Embassy had supported its establishment and quietly aided its development. A State Department representative in Quito “was doing everything in his power” to assist with the founding of “a school for these nationals in Quito, Ecuador.”⁹¹ That school, Colegio Americano de Quito, would be among the first schools in Latin America to receive a grant when a formal funding program was initiated by the OIAA.

The last impediment to official US government support for independent US-sponsored schools overseas was congressional approval. The OIAA had wide leverage in allocating funds for cultural programs in Latin America, and in the early 1940s, it began to offer small grants to assist a limited number of schools like the Colegio Americano de Quito. Yet, by then it was already clear to diplomats, businesses, academics, educators, parents, and students that a more permanent and extensive solution was needed to address the problems of educating US children abroad. By then, it was also clear to the US

⁹⁰ “Ecuador Gets New U.S. School,” *NYT*, 29 Sept. 1940.

⁹¹ Louis C. Rabaut, testimony, *HR6599*, 21 Jan. 1942, p. 144.

diplomatic bureaucracy that the nation had relatively limited cultural influence among Latin American elites as compared to European nations --both allies and enemies. The failure to engage in cultural diplomacy and to encourage and support US schools abroad had left the US at a serious disadvantage in this regard, and this failing became obvious with the rise of Nazism. In the end, fear among US politicians that Axis influence was winning over Latin American elites to Nazism convinced a skeptical Congress and secured long-term funding for independent, non-sectarian American overseas schools.

Berlin's expenditures on German elementary and secondary schools in Latin America during the 1930s and 1940s were estimated at \$6,000,000.⁹² So prominent were German schools in Latin American cities that members of a US congressional delegation became alarmed by their numbers on a fact finding tour of the region in 1941. On return to Washington they informed their colleagues that they had been "forced to take cognizance of the existence of German schools down there, which have not been established just since Hitler came to power."⁹³ Everywhere the delegation went, US diplomats, embassy and consular staffs, businessmen and their wives impressed upon them the need for US-sponsored schools in the region. On their return, the visiting Congressmen argued that the United States had ignored cultural diplomacy for too long. They were especially concerned that there were too few independent and non-sectarian American schools in the region to counterbalance the Axis schools.

Recognizing that schools were a vehicle for spreading influence, supporting US business and diplomacy abroad, and sustaining friendly relations with host countries, US support for American schools in Latin America began in 1941 with small grants. After

⁹² Charles Thompson, testimony, *HR2599*, 15 Feb. 1943, p. 321.

⁹³ Rabaut, testimony, *HR 6599*, p. 144.

consulting with the State Department, the OIAA made these grants to independent, non-sectarian American schools. The support was intended to cover operating expenses or to be used toward the purchase of capital equipment that would boost the prestige of the schools. Grants initially targeted crisis situations that had been brought on by the war. As the Corry report indicated, some existing American schools in Latin America were suffering. With the start of hostilities in Europe donations had fallen off, some US citizens were leaving for home, and US teachers were resigning. At the same time, demand for American schools in Latin America was increasing as Axis schools closed and more Latin Americans embraced Pan Americanism.⁹⁴ Seizing a key opportunity to gain influence, promote its visions of Pan American identity, and foster mutual understanding among the elite, Rockefeller's OIAA initiated support for American schools with the hope they would attract those Latin Americans who had previously enrolled their children in the German schools. To a large extent, this did begin to occur during the war.⁹⁵ These funds provided a solution to the educational problems of some US families living in the region as well as an educational option for nationals looking for an alternative to Catholic and European dominated education.

By 1943, the OIAA had significantly increased its funding of American schools in Latin America. That year it granted a total of \$250,000 to nine schools in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. With such grants, the OIAA and the State Department signaled that support for such schools had become critically important:

It seems imperative in light of recent developments that the United States Government should not only assist, financially and in other ways, good

⁹⁴ US Department of State, *The Cultural Cooperation Program 1938-1943*, p. 29.

⁹⁵ William Schurz, testimony, *HR2599*, 15 Feb. 1943, p. 342.

*nonsectarian schools now existing, but should also embark upon a large-scale and long-term program for the establishment of new schools.*⁹⁶

Convinced of the necessity of such assistance, the OIAA transferred this funding program to the Department of State in 1943. As the OIAA was a temporary agency, the Department of State's assumption of the program ensured the continuance of funding for such schools after the war.⁹⁷ With this administrative transfer, support for independent US-sponsored schools became an official budgetary line item of the US government.

Between the end of the Second World War and the 1964 founding of the Department of State's Office of Overseas Schools, the number of United States citizens working abroad increased significantly. Resulting in part from the expansion of US diplomatic missions and the rise of multi-national corporations, a growing number of US citizens abroad fueled the founding of hundreds of elementary and secondary schools for US children and foreign nationals in Latin America and throughout the world. After the world war and in a climate of Cold War, the US government readily offered support for many of these schools.⁹⁸

Conclusion

Before the US traditions of limited government and deference to private initiatives were radically altered by the New Deal, the State Department took little interest in the education of US children abroad. Though the Department historically complied with US business demands for activist foreign policy, it ignored growing calls for official assistance with schooling. Beginning in the 1930s, however, demands for

⁹⁶ US Department of State, *The Cultural Cooperation Program 1938-1943*, p. 9.

⁹⁷ Cordell Hull, testimony, *HR2599*, 8 Feb. 1943, p. 7.

⁹⁸ By 1965, 121 independent, nonsectarian schools were receiving grants from the Department of State. Over a third of these schools were located in Latin America. American Association of School Administrators (AASA), *The Mission Called the O/OS* (Washington: AASA, 1966).

assistance became more difficult to ignore. Several factors worked to encourage US government interest in the schools its citizens had founded or wanted to found abroad.

First, the new Pan Americanism increased the US diplomatic presence in Latin America. Increases in diplomatic staffs in the region also resulted from the forced closures of foreign stations in occupied Europe and Asia; once the war began, the Department of State had a surplus of experienced civil servants and diplomats who were displaced from the war zone. Many of these surplus employees were reassigned to the region where US diplomatic programs were actually expanding. Assistant Secretary of State Dean Acheson explained that “whereas many of the nations with which we have been dealing elsewhere in the past are now temporarily out of the picture, South America is more in the picture than ever before.”⁹⁹ The jump in the number of US government employees living in Latin America increased the number of US parents searching for suitable schools for their children.

Second, with the encouragement of the executive branch there was substantial growth in the number of US firms opening offices in Latin America from the late 1930s forward. The State Department’s contemporary foreign economic policy led to growth in the number of private US citizens and, as a result, US families living abroad. Secretary of State Hull’s reciprocal trade agreements encouraged greater commerce between the US and Latin American countries. And as the war began to close European markets to raw materials and products from the Americas, inter-American trade increased the number of US nationals and US children living below the Rio Grande. One result was that

⁹⁹ Dean Acheson, testimony, *HR6599*, p. 21.

businesses began to pressure the Department of State for assistance in locating schools for the children of their US employees.

Simultaneously, changes to citizenship statutes and Foreign Service personnel policies had the effect of increasing the number of children in Latin America who could claim US citizenship. Children of US mothers and foreign fathers who lived abroad were no longer excluded from citizenship and a 1940 nationality act ended citizenship residency requirement for many children and parents. The act ensured that fewer families would be forced to send children home during important schooling years. Yet, eliminating this residency hardship did not change the fact that there were still very limited school options for US children in Latin America. In fact, these changes only exacerbated demand as more families stayed in region for longer terms. The State Department began to publicly acknowledge that US overseas business growth was dependent on solving the education problems of its citizens abroad. In appeals to Congress for school funds, the Department would eventually be quite explicit:

*Schools are very important in keeping American business men and women in Latin America, because a great many of them do not want to go to South America unless they are assured that there are American school facilities there for their children. If they are not assured of that, they simply will not go. They serve that very useful purpose.*¹⁰⁰

Third, the Corry report revealed that nationals of the host countries made up a large percentage of the student populations of existing company, denominational, and American schools. While European culture had historically been favored by Latin American elites, when they were given the option of US-style education for their children many embraced it enthusiastically. To the delight of the State Department and the OIAA both the independent, non-sectarian schools and the high-quality denominational schools

¹⁰⁰ Schurz, testimony, HR2599, p. 342.

sponsored by US citizens frequently attracted children of host-country government officials and business leaders. As such, foreign policymakers in Washington came to recognize that US-sponsored schools in Latin America presented an opportunity for US citizens to mix among the ruling classes. They saw an opportunity to make up for the years of non-engagement in cultural diplomacy that had left the US at a competitive disadvantage with European nations in cultural arenas. As US diplomats formulated cultural relations programs around the goals of mutual understanding and Pan American identity, administrators of US-sponsored schools in Latin America emphasized the value of building long-term cultural relationships within communities:

What goodwill exists in the minds of these people toward North America is not so much the result of our recent and occasionally naïve efforts as it is the result of the long-term work which has been carried on by our schools, church groups, and those few businessmen who came here sensitive...¹⁰¹

Short-term good neighborliness would not be enough. Between the late 1930s and early 1940s, the OIAA and the State Department became convinced that the growing US business and diplomatic presence in Latin America necessitated some form of assistance to US-sponsored schools. Given escalating war-time spending, convincing Congress that a formal assistance program was warranted would prove another challenge. But armed with the knowledge that existing US-sponsored schools were attracting influential locals, justification for an assistance program could be framed as crucial to achieving inter-American unity against anti-democratic forces.

Fourth, contemporary educational reform agendas in Latin America and the US created fertile ground on which American school could be established. In Colombia, the limited national education system had long been structured around European Catholic

¹⁰¹ Amsden, "American Schools Make 'Good Neighbors' Better," p. 82.

models and significantly staffed by foreign-born educators. Historically, there was little resistance to foreign influence in education. As Liberal reforms of the 1930s encourage the growth of schools at all levels and sought to break the grip of the Catholic Church on education, independent and non-sectarian schools sponsored by US nationals were warmly welcomed by government and private citizens. In the US, as the educational reform movement turned to Congress and demanded equalization of nation's education system, the federal-state relationship in education was increasingly debated. In this process, many politicians and educators asserted a federal responsibility for the education of all US children and the discourse dovetailed nicely into arguments for recognition of US children abroad. US education was still recovering from the Depression, but over the previous three decades it had been strengthened by the High School Movement and the professionalization of the teaching field. Building upon transnational educational connections established through the PAU, organizations like the Institute of International Education, the American Council on Education, and the National Education Association proved very willing and enthusiastic about addressing the challenges of US education abroad.

The conditions at home and abroad were conducive to formal US government support for American schools in Latin America, but overseas education was still a low priority for a Congress and a presidential administration negotiating New Deal liberalism in the wake of a depression and in the build up to a world war. Though more and more politicians, diplomats, and professional educators were pressuring the federal government to assist American schools in Latin America, it was wartime fears of German fifth columns more than a sense of obligation to its citizens abroad that expedited

Congressional support for a school assistance program. As US fear of Nazi influence among upper-class Latin Americans reached a climax, consensus over the importance of American schools abroad was achieved for the first time.

Chapter Three

Local Schools, Transnational Schools

This chapter treats the founding and early growth of American schools in Barranquilla and Bogotá from the late 1930s through World War II and the early post-war. It demonstrates how both US support for American schools and Colombian policies toward them developed in the context of world war. Placing the intimate lives of families at the center of diplomacy, it details how US businessmen, wives, and diplomats joined with Colombian elite and other resident foreigners to create educational options for their children. In the process, they influenced the direction of US cultural diplomacy and gave substance to emerging Colombian-US cultural relations.

While the two schools here considered were initially designed to meet the educational needs of US and other foreign families, each rapidly began to serve elite Colombian populations. Historicizing these institutions and their cultures, the chapter provides a window into new transnational communities that were emerging in the Andes and on the Caribbean. Exploring these communities, it demonstrates how common interests in education and shared experiences with it energized Colombian-US cultural collaboration.

To begin, a demographic overview provides a statistical portrait of foreigners who resided in Colombia during the middle decades of the twentieth century. As the number of European nationals living in the nation declined, the number of US citizens residing there increased substantially. As resident US business, military and diplomatic personnel increased during war and post-war, more US families were living in urban Colombia and in need of schools for their children. This first section considers demand for American

schools as a function of demographic change. Subsequent sections examine the founding and early development of the first American schools in Colombia, the Colegio Karl C. Parrish in Caribbean Barranquilla and the Anglo-American School of Andean Bogotá. Importantly, each of these sections details how the independent schools began to attract the attention of both local Colombian elite and cultural policymakers in Washington.

Yankees and Europeans: The Changing Demographics of Foreigners in Colombia

On the eve of World War II, Colombia's national census documented relatively few foreign nationals residing in the nation. Non-Colombians represented just slightly more than one half of 1% of the nation's population (or 56,418 foreigners in a total population of 8.7 million people). The *Contraloría General de la República*, the government agency responsible for the census, considered the figure very low when compared to the more developed nations in the region. Latin Americans were 47% of the total foreign population and individuals from neighboring countries were the majority. Venezuelans made up approximately half of the foreign total, and their most significant concentration was found in the Department of *Norte de Santander* [Northern Santander] in the Northeast interior of the country. The department's capital, Cucuta, sits close to the Venezuelan border and the people on both sides of the international demarcation share a regional culture that transcends national distinction. After Norte de Santander, the Departments of *Cundinamarca* and *Atlántico*, whose capitals are Bogotá and Barranquilla, respectively, were home to the next greatest concentrations of foreigners. Yet as compared to Norte de Santander, the foreign populations in Barranquilla and Bogotá were more diverse and decidedly more European. Slightly more foreigners lived in Caribbean Barranquilla than Andean Bogotá, and because Bogotá was more than two

times larger than Barranquilla, the foreign population constituted a much higher percentage overall in the Caribbean port. Barranquilla had a more obvious foreign community on its streets and in its neighborhoods. While many of the foreigners in Bogotá were formally tied to embassies (or legations) and were most visible in diplomatic social circles, foreigners in Barranquilla were more integrated into the broader economic and cultural life of the city. The numbers of foreigners in the nation's other principal cities of Cali, Cartagena, and Medellín were at that time significantly lower.¹

With the exception of nationals from neighboring countries, the 1938 census categorized foreigners broadly by region or continent. As the figures were compiled and analyzed against the backdrop of a looming world war, the Contraloría determined that future censuses should include more specific country breakdowns of foreign nationals. Cognizant that the war in Europe could soon affect immigration, the Contraloría regretted not having identified foreign residents more precisely by nation so as to track more closely future changes.² After Latin Americans, Europeans were the second major foreign grouping, and they made up 43% of the total resident foreigners (24,396 people). There were only slightly more Western than Eastern Europeans.

Of the remaining foreign population, approximately 7% were classified as Asians, and the largest concentration were Middle Easterners who lived mainly on the Caribbean coast. Most were Syrians, Lebanese, and Palestinians that had come to the Colombian Caribbean in relatively large numbers beginning in the late 1800s. Establishing commercial networks linking Barranquilla with the interior regions of coastal departments, they quickly integrated into upper and middle-class Costeño society. In a

¹ "Nacionalidad, por sección del país y sexo," Cuadro 62, *Censo General de Población: 5 de Julio de 1938*, p. 144-147.

² Ibid.

region where descendents of Spaniards, Africans and Indians distinguished the coastal *mestizaje* from the more dominant Spanish-Indian strain of the Andean interior, *árabes* or *turcos* (Arabs or Turks, as they were commonly called) found few racial barriers to social integration and miscegenation.³

North Americans, a category that grouped US and Canadian nationals together, represented less than 4% of the total foreigners (just 2,152 people).⁴ While the US population in Colombia was quite small in 1938, it was trending upward as European populations were moving in the opposite direction. These demographic trends were crucial to the demand for American schools and growing US cultural influence in the nation. The overall upward trend for US figures continued until guerilla warfare and drug trafficking made Colombia a less desirable posting for US citizens and their families by the 1970s.

Based on Colombian census figures for 1938 and US State Department estimates for 1942, the number of US citizens living in Colombia increased by about 30% over that four year period. Part of the increase was the result of new citizenship statutes that reclassified some US mothers and their children as citizens. The elimination of US residency requirements for families overseas meant that families could stay longer and grow larger without having to return home for periods in residence. An increase in US diplomatic staff and cultural personnel that came through Pan American programming was also an important factor. Washington placed great emphasis on Colombia in its wartime diplomacy. Strategically located near the Panama Canal and home to an

³ Posada-Carbó, *The Colombian Caribbean*, pp. 185-188.

⁴ "Población extranjera por nacionalidad, grupos de edad y sexo en el departamento," Cuadro 18, *Censo de Población – 1951 (May 9) Resumen general del país, tomo XVI* (Bogotá: Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, 1954), pp. 82-89; "Población extranjera por grupos de edad y sexo, según países de nacimiento," Cuadro 15, *XIII Censo Nacional de Población – (15 de Julio 1964) Resumen general del país* (Bogotá: Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, 1967), p. 70.

influential German community, US policymakers prioritized Colombian support for Pan American unity against the Axis powers. Though not very well developed economically, Colombia possessed rich oil reserves and mineral deposits and, compared with its neighbors, had tremendous potential that could be harnessed during and after the war. At that time, and indeed throughout the century, Washington considered Colombia to be the most democratic of the other American republics; as David Bushnell has pointed out, by the early 1940s Colombia “came closer to exemplifying the democratic ideals for which the United States claimed to be striving than did the systems of most Latin American nations.”⁵

As the foreign population in Colombia increased (but decreased as a percentage of the national population) so, too, did the US presence. By 1964 the Colombian national population had doubled from 8.7 million (1938) to 17.5 million. Of the 75,053 foreigners censused in 1964, a total of 7,561 were US citizens, who now represented 10% of the total foreign nationals resident in Colombia. This was a sizeable change from 1938 when they comprised less than 4% of that total. Most significant, US citizens alone accounted for 29% of the increase in foreign presence in quarter century before 1964. Clearly, more US citizens were taking up residence in Colombia, both temporarily and permanently, in the middle decades of the twentieth century. Within this upward trend, a change in the gender demographics should be noted. Whereas in 1938 65% of all US nationals in Colombia were male, a quarter century later (1964) a 52%/48% male/female split characterized this population. Many factors drove the overall trend toward gender equalization among US residents in Colombia: more marriages between US and Colombian citizens, increasing numbers of women in US diplomacy, and the expansion

⁵ Bushnell, *Eduardo Santos and the Good Neighbor*, p. 120.

of foreign religious missions and US businesses in the nation. Additionally, in the US, women were disproportionately employed in the broad field of education below the university level; therefore women were more likely than men to accept assignments in Colombia (and Latin America more generally) as US teachers, administrators, and librarians engaged in cultural diplomacy.

Other important trends between 1938 and 1964 are noteworthy. Approximately one third of the foreign population of Colombia was Venezuelan or Ecuadoran during this period, but overall European presence declined. While Europeans were 43% of the total foreigners in 1938, their percentage of the total foreigner population declined to 40% in 1951 and to 33% by 1964. Thus, as the US presence was clearly increasing, the overall European presence was on the decline. Contemporary immigration restrictions placed on Eastern Europeans by Colombian law were a factor, yet among Western European nations, only Spain recorded increases as a percentage of the total foreign population. (Such growth reflected the turmoil of the Spanish civil war, repression under the Franco regime, and the resultant migration of effected peoples to Latin America.) The German presence, which is everywhere noted as particularly strong prior to the war, declined rapidly in proportion to other foreign nationals. While more Germans than US nationals lived in Colombia through the 1930s, by 1951 the size of these communities were approximately equal. By 1964, however, the German population had declined to approximately half the size of the US resident community. The small French and British populations also declined slightly, representing just 2.3% and 1% of the resident foreigners respectively in 1964.⁶

⁶ This information comes from Colombian national censuses in 1938, 1951, and 1964. "Nacionalidad y estado civil de los habitantes," Cuadro 61, *Censo General de Población: 5 de Julio de 1938*, p. 143;

Children and teenagers were part of the changing demographics of foreign nationals in Colombia, and they impacted the developing national system of private and public schooling. Unfortunately, statistics for foreign youth in Colombia are imprecise before mid-century. In 1951, there were 9,071 foreigners under 20 years of age living in Colombia, and the vast majority was from bordering South American, Central American and Caribbean nations. Together, Latin American children and teenagers accounted for more than two-thirds of the total foreign youth. At that time, there were just 753 US children and teenagers residing in the nation, but they were 8.3% of the total foreign youth and this figure far exceeded those for any individual Western European country. In the aggregate, Western European youth represented approximately 22% of foreign youth in Colombia; individually, however, German youth were just 6% of the overall total, Spaniards and Italians each amounted to only 3%, and British and French youth made up just 2% each. Soviets made up less than 1% of the total foreign youth.

As compared to their Latin Americans age cohorts, both US and Europeans youth were disproportionately concentrated in the national capital at Bogotá, the Caribbean port of Barranquilla, and the increasingly important industrial center of Medellín in the Andean interior.⁷ By 1964, the population of foreign youth in Colombia had increased dramatically, with children younger than 15 years of age totaling 19,498. Latin American nationals showed sizable increases at this age level and now accounted for three-quarters of all foreign children in Colombia. The proportion of US children rose to 13% (or 2,614 individuals) of all foreign children. Notably, the US figure surpassed the aggregate total

“Nacionalidad, por sección del país y sexo,” Cuadro 62, *Censo General de Población: 5 de Julio de 1938*, pp. 144-149; “Población extranjera,” Cuadro 18, *Censo de Población – 1951*; “Población extranjera,” Cuadro 15, *XIII Censo Nacional de Población – (15 de Julio 1964)*. On Colombian immigration policies and foreigners in Colombia in general, see Rodrigo de J. Garcia Estrada, *Los Extranjeros en Colombia*.

⁷ “Población extranjera,” Cuadro 18, *Censo de Población – 1951*.

of all Western European children in Colombia, which amounted to just 11% (2,082 individuals). Spanish children were the largest single Western European group at 3.8% of the total while German and Italian children were by then just 1.2% each. British children amounted to barely one-half of one percent and there were only a handful of French youth.⁸

The changing demographics of foreigners in Colombia mirrored increasing US and decreasing European cultural influence in the nation. Understanding those changing influences, however, requires not just simple scrutiny of census data, but analysis of contact zones where US and Colombian nationals interacted. Beginning in the late 1930s, American schools in Caribbean and Andean cities were one important arena for such contact. As US populations increased and moved toward gender parity in Colombia, more US children were living in those cities. US parents sought schooling that would eventually allow smooth transition for their children into secondary schools, colleges, or universities at home. At the same time, some upper class-Colombian families began to embrace and help direct the US-style education offered in these local institutions. Historicizing the emergence of these schools and analyzing the cultures of the transnational educational communities they fostered articulates an important arena where traditional European cultural influence was displaced at mid-century.

The Colegio Karl C. Parrish in Barranquilla

Constructing a Transnational Educational Community on the Caribbean

The first independent, non-sectarian US-sponsored school in Colombia opened in Barranquilla in 1938. The *Colegio Karl C. Parrish* was founded through the efforts of a group of US, Canadian and British families in residence in the city, which then had a

⁸ “Población extranjera,” Cuadro 15, *XIII Censo Nacional de Población – (15 de Julio 1964)*.

population of approximately 152,000. Some of the income-earning parents of the English speaking children who would attend the colegio were employed by US, Colombian, or other foreign firms; others owned independent enterprises or had a professional practice based in the city. Many were long-term residents of the Colombian Caribbean. Others lived there for shorter periods and they (and their families) would transfer in or out of the country based upon employment. Some of the US families were subjected to US residency requirements for the maintenance of their children's citizenship. With plans to eventually send their children to North American or British high schools and universities, many of these parents wanted a school that would allow their children to transfer in or out of other English speaking schools at "home" and abroad "with no loss of scholastic standing."⁹

Barranquilla and the coastal region were, as Colombian historian Eduardo Posada-Carbó explains, historically more "open to the outside world compared to the rest of the country."¹⁰ On its streets, in its traditions, and in its cultural institutions, the influences of the world beyond the shoreline were obvious. The official Colegio Parrish version of its own institutional history celebrates this openness and the "truly cosmopolitan, international character" of the school at its founding.¹¹ The Propeller Club, a private group of "American" men, took the lead in founding the colegio. Club members who were city-based administrators for US petroleum corporations and the United Fruit Company were important to these efforts, but enthusiasm for the project equally came from salesmen and the independent professionals who were members of the

⁹ *The Karl C. Parrish School* (Barranquilla: Tipografía Escofet, 1943), Prospectus 1943, Office of the Director, Colegio Karl C. Parrish, Barranquilla (hereafter KCP MSS).

¹⁰ Posada-Carbó, *The Colombian Caribbean*, p. 180.

¹¹ Colegio Karl C. Parrish, "Academics," <http://www.kcparrish.edu.co/en/academics/academics.htm> [accessed on 12/10/07].

club.¹² As they laid plans for the school, their project was joined by others from the foreign colony. Canadian, British, Dutch, and Norwegian families expressed interest in sending their children to the school, and they participated in its founding. Upper-class Colombian families also proved enthusiastic during the initial planning. As war in Europe was moving closer to reality, many of the locally residing foreigners and local Colombian parents were aware of and uneasy with the Nazification then under way in the Colegio Alemán de Barranquilla, the premier foreign school in the city. North Americans, Europeans, and Colombians founded the Colegio Parrish in part to offer an English language alternative to the Nazi-affiliated German school.

For the first years, the new American school occupied two houses in the Barranquilla's exclusive El Prado neighborhood. This was one of a number of modern urban housing developments that had been built by Parrish & Co., a real estate venture owned by Karl C. Parrish, who had died in the early 1930s and for whom the school was named. Parrish, a US citizen who lived with his family in the city for three decades before his death, had originally come to Colombia at the turn of the century pursuing a career in mining. From the mines of the Andes, he eventually found his way to the coast where he became an influential contributor to Barranquilla's modernization. As Parrish's housing projects multiplied, they provided new urban spaces not just for the local elites and foreigners but the emerging Barranquillero middle class. Notably, these urban developments were planned with contemporary US urban and suburban neighborhood models in mind, but the architecture itself combined tropical design with Colombian,

¹² Most of the families affiliated with the United Fruit Company lived in Santa Marta and not Barranquilla. In that nearby coastal city, the company maintained a small primary school for the US children of its employees. Children of Colombian managers also attended the school.

Italian, Greek, Moorish, French, and German architectural styles.¹³ Through his involvement with urban planning, Parrish became instrumental in the modernization and expansion of city services. According to Posada-Carbó, Parrish and his company had “direct involvement in practically every single step of Barranquilla’s urban development: the paving of its sandy streets, the organization of public services, and the construction of its aqueduct and sewer system.”¹⁴ Perhaps most significantly, Parrish and his brother Robert played a crucial role in securing the dredging of the mouth of the Magdalena River. The powerful and muddy Magdalena met the blue Caribbean just a few kilometers past Barranquilla, but the sediment it carried from the volcanic Andean interior clogged the mouth and interfered with ship passage between river and sea. While Barranquilla’s river docks received all shipments from the interior heading to the Caribbean and beyond, shipments arriving from abroad or exports from the interior had to move over a railway between the city’s docks and its Caribbean port, Puerto Colombia. The permanent opening of the mouth of the river changed Barranquilla forever by connecting it more closely to the sea. For this and other reasons, Barranquilleros have long equated the name Parrish with Colombian modernity.¹⁵

The Parrish family was well integrated into Barranquilla society, and some of Karl’s children and children’s children remained there and lived as locals throughout the twentieth century. With US citizenship and Colombian residency, the extended family

¹³ Reflecting its unique hybrid style and the quality of its design, the El Prado neighborhood was designated a national monument in the late 1990s. Carlos Bell Lemus, “Urbanización El Prado en Barranquilla: Karl Parrish,” *Revista Credencial Historia* no. 114 (June 1999), p. 4.

¹⁴ Posada-Carbó, *The Colombian Caribbean*, p. 194.

¹⁵ Revisionist historians and anti-imperialists broadly and simplistically painted US businessmen like Karl C. Parrish as agents of economic imperialism. Yet, such assessments assumed much about the meaning citizenship carried for US businessmen abroad. Parrish was financially invested in the Colombian Caribbean, but as a long-time resident he was personally invested as well. At times he was openly criticized by US diplomats and businessmen for siding with local over US interests in business controversies. See Posada-Carbó, *The Colombian Caribbean*, pp. 197-98, 208-209.

lived a binational existence on the multicultural Caribbean coast. They were transnationals in every sense. Their lives crossed borders and defied the simple national labels carried on their residency papers and passports. They were connected to families, communities, and businesses at “home” in the US, but their daily lives were rooted in a Colombo-Caribbean reality. There, on that coast, where local families, communities, and businesses claimed them as well, the name Karl C. Parrish was a fitting title for the new colegio. While it identified the school with US-style education and modernity, it equally grounded the institution in local Barranquillero culture. To this day in the city, the name Parrish is as much considered local as foreign.

At its opening in 1938, the Colegio Parrish enrolled about two dozen students from the foreign colony. There were a few Colombian students in the school as well. Initially, US children outnumbered all others, but the immediate trend was toward greater Colombian than US enrollment. By 1942, when the school had grown to forty-five students, more than a third was Colombian, and because the tuition and fees were double the average private school rate in Barranquilla, these were exclusively upper-class nationals. Interestingly, as a contrast, most of the US students were members of the US middle class; their fathers were salesmen, infrastructure engineers, bank managers, and representatives of export firms. These men were high school graduates and some had university degrees, but they were not wealthy. At home in the US, they lived comfortably but in Colombia their standards of living were higher. Favorable monetary exchange rates, lower prices of food staples, and cheaper labor and service costs abroad increased disposable income for many of these US families. Corporate benefits extended to employees as incentives for accepting and then remaining in an overseas position, which

for some included tuition assistance for children, raised living standards further.¹⁶ Class is a culturally specific construct, and in Colombia as elsewhere wealth was the fundamental marker of elite status. Yet in a nation with so few schools, a formal education was also an important marker of that class. That those members of the US middle class who lived in Colombian cities often had both a high standard of living and education credentials (a high school diploma and/or a university degree) facilitated their acceptance into local elite culture.

Over time, the increasing number of Colombians in the Colegio Parrish student body was reflected on the school's board of directors; originally the board was composed of all English-speaking foreigners but by the early 1950s half its members would be Colombian nationals.¹⁷ Through the war years, the school had a small teaching staff. Initially one of the founders had gone to the US, recruited a single, female teacher, and accompanied her to Barranquilla. By 1942, the teaching staff totaled three: two young women from the US, one of whom acted as director of the school and also taught the older students, and a Colombian woman, who taught the Spanish, history and geography curriculum that was then required by law.¹⁸ Teacher turnover tended to be high and there was annual demand for more teachers to handle increasing enrollment. Unfortunately, recruitment posed a serious challenge for the board of directors. Hiring US teachers and getting them safely to Barranquilla during the war proved difficult, and ocean transportation was a particular concern after the sinking of the *Resolute*. The school continually asked the local US consul, the embassy in Bogotá, the OIAA, and the State

¹⁶ Myron Reed to David Richardson, 3 July 1942, Office of Inter-American Affairs, Record Group 229, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland (hereafter NARG 229), Department of Information, Coordination Committee for Colombia (hereafter DI/CCC), Box (hereafter B)1357, Folder (hereafter F:)Barranquilla 1942.

¹⁷ "Board of Directors," *Karl C. Parrish School, 1938-2004*, KCP MSS.

¹⁸ Reed to Richardson, 3 July 1942.

Department for assistance in recruiting and facilitating transportation for new teachers. The board especially wanted new teachers to be placed on priority air transportation lists that were controlled by the US government for the limited weekly flights between Miami and Barranquilla. But their requests were ignored and teachers often arrived late. Although demand for teachers increased, teacher turnover remained high, and transportation and recruitment issues continued. Therefore, it became common for locally residing native English-speaking women --some the wives of Colombians, others married to US, British, and Canadian businessmen-- to join the teaching staff.¹⁹

In these early years, the school enrolled students in grades kindergarten through nine. English was the language of instruction and assessments were based on the New York State Regents exams. Still, Spanish was emphasized. Indeed, even before Decree 91 of 1942 placed restrictions on foreign schools and foreign language instruction, Spanish was a daily subject beginning in the third grade. A stated objective of the school was that students would learn to “speak perfect Spanish and have a good knowledge of Colombian history and geography.”²⁰ Non-English speaking students were required to enroll in language tutoring before entering any grade except kindergarten.²¹ Outside of class, US fathers taught baseball to interested students, and there was plenty of interest; the game had arrived in Colombia decades earlier and was popular throughout the coast.

¹⁹ Reed to Richardson, 28 Sept. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Barranquilla 1942; Edwin Sours to Coordination Committee for Colombia, 19 Aug. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Barranquilla 1943; Harold Colvocoresses to Myron Reed, 11 Aug. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Barranquilla 1943; Commencement Programs, “Fifth Commencement, July 17, 1943” and “Eighth Commencement, June 30, 1946,” KCP MSS; *The Karl C. Parrish School*, Prospectus 1943; “School Directors and Principals,” *Karl C. Parrish School, 1938-2004*, KCP MSS.

²⁰ Edwin W. Sours, Jr. for Barranquilla Regional Sub-Committee, “Proposed School Building for the Karl C. Parrish School Barranquilla,” NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1374, F: Project Authorizations 1942-1943.

²¹ *The Karl C. Parrish School*, Prospectus 1943.

Colombian dads coached student *fútbol* [soccer] teams.²² Basketball, already growing in popularity nationally, was also a part of the physical education program of the school.²³

Significantly, no religious instruction was offered at the colegio, and this reflected two important aspects of religious dynamics in Colombia. First, the Catholic Church was historically weaker on the Caribbean than in the Andes. Like the national government, the Church had long skewed its resources toward the interior and paid less attention to the coast. As a result, there was less social deference to Church authority in the region.²⁴ Thus, at the time of its founding the school felt little pressure to offer Catholic religious instruction, and the lack of Church reaction to the decision also signaled Liberal success in limiting Church influence over national education. Second, because many of the foreign families of the new colegio were not Catholics but Protestants, not offering religion classes was a means to avoid antagonizing the Catholic Church. At that time, the Catholic hierarchy was deeply concerned over Protestant activity across the nation, and schools started by foreign Protestants were its number one target.²⁵ Extreme rhetoric within the Church even charged that Pan American cooperation was nothing more than a veiled attempt by the US at spreading Protestantism in Catholic lands.²⁶ While this topic will be explored more broadly in a later chapter, it is important to here underscore that the decision by the founders to keep the colegio secular signaled their desire to steer clear

²² Reed to Richardson, 3 July 1942.

²³ *The Karl C. Parrish School*, Prospectus 1943.

²⁴ Posada-Carbó, *The Colombian Caribbean*, pp. 30, 245.

²⁵ Michael J. LaRosa, "Cleavages of the Cross: The Catholic Church from Right to Left in Contemporary Colombia" (PhD diss., University of Miami, 1995), p. 86.

²⁶ "Editorial: Los Enemigos de la Buena Vecinidad," *El Pueblo* (Medellín), 2 Mar. 1943; John W. White, *Our Good Neighbor Hurdle* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1943), pp. 1-18; Devon C. Corbett. "Review of *Our Good Neighbor Hurdle*," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 24, no. 1 (February 1944), pp. 107-112

of this inter-American controversy. They committed to building up Pan American sentiment and avoiding engagements that might tear it down.²⁷

Graduation ceremonies for those students completing the Colegio Parrish elementary program and moving on to secondary schools elsewhere were held annually beginning at the end of the first year. Student graduation speeches, music performances by the student body, and addresses by invited speakers provide insight into the developing transnational culture of the school. Graduating students usually gave an address based on a paper they had researched and written. Both US and Colombian topics were popular in these addresses by US, Colombian and third-country nationals, but most papers focused directly or indirectly on the war. Not surprisingly, Pan American themes were common and included celebratory comparisons of George Washington and Simón Bolívar. Invited speakers were most often US businessmen (often fathers of students or school board members) or US and British diplomats; like the students, these adults also chose the war and Pan American unity as general themes. Indicative of the high standing of the young school among Colombians, speakers also included well-known local politicians like the Governor of Atlántico (the department of which Barranquilla is the capital).

Music education was a strong part of the colegio's academic program, and commencement ceremonies featured musical performance. The playing of both the Colombian and US national anthems was an important part of the ceremony even though the inclusion of the US anthem was a technical violation of Decree 91 of 1942 that attempted to limit foreign influence in schools within the nation. According to the decree, national hymns of friendly countries could be played only at school ceremonies honoring

²⁷ *The Karl C. Parrish School*, Prospectus 1943.

those countries' national days. The target of that provision in the decree had been Axis schools and clubs, and in a time of war there was little outrage for public playing of the anthems of the Allied nations. At the ceremonies, younger students performed songs they were taught by the school's music teacher. Reflecting the both international make-up and contemporary politics of the school community, folk songs from the Allied nations and Axis-occupied lands were performed and European classical music was often played.²⁸

In the school's first decade, only between two and five students graduated at the end of grade eight. By that age, those US and other foreign students still at the school usually moved on to high schools in their home countries, though it was not unusual for a foreign student to be tutored through grade nine or ten. Colombians enrolled in local private secondary schools, but some also moved on to schools abroad. In those years, graduates from the eighth grade were more likely to be girls than boys, and because US and other foreign children tended to come and go with the transfers of their parents to other countries or reassignments to the US, graduates were also increasingly more likely to be Colombian nationals. However, the line between foreign and local (or foreigner and Colombian in this case) was imprecise among students and graduates of the Colegio Parrish. In this developing transnational education community, many of the Colombian students were themselves the children and grandchildren of foreign immigrants who had married into elite local families. Such students included several members of the Parrish family itself. Indeed, programs for the school's commencement exercises from that first decade and beyond suggest a high degree of transnational marriages among the

²⁸ Commencement Programs, KCP MSS. See: "First Commencement, Karl C. Parrish School, Barranquilla, Colombia. July 1939"; "Second Commencement, July 1940"; "Third Commencement, July 1941"; "Fourth Commencement, July 1942"; "Fifth Commencement, July 17, 1943"; "Sixth Commencement, July 1944"; "Seventh Commencement, July 1945"; "Eighth Commencement, June 30, 1946"; "Ninth Commencement, July 1947."

Colombian families of Colegio Parrish that is identifiable by the strong presence of traditional Lebanese, Syrian, German, Anglo (US/British/Canadian), and Italian family names among graduates.²⁹

Family names are indicative of the cultural diversity of the Colombian upper class in Barranquilla and the transnational currents that historically break on Caribbean shores.³⁰ For the purpose of this study, the case of Colegio Parrish underscores the need to be cautious of granting too much significance to individuals' citizenships as determinants of their identities. The identities individuals cultivate do not exclusively follow the flag, and multiple versions of national culture, which inform identity, exist simultaneously. If we want to understand the complexity of foreign/local encounters in contact zones, we have to acknowledge that citizenship status has historically limited our understanding of the terms "foreigner" and "local." Citizenship is itself socially constructed and it is artificially imposed as a powerful identity upon individuals whose economic, cultural, and political ties and personal identities may be more regional than national or transnational than nation-specific.³¹

On the Colombian Caribbean, a multi-cultural world connected as much to the Greater Caribbean as to the Andean interior, upper-class Colombian students and families at the new Colegio Parrish lived culturally between the false and static borders of

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Garcia Estrada, *Los Extranjeros en Colombia*, pp. 225-226.

³¹ For the past two decades, studies of migration have been conceptualizing transnationalism within the immigrant experience. Initially, anthropologists led the way: Nina Glick-Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Szanto-Blanc, *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity, and Nationalism Reconsidered* (New York: NY Academy of Sciences, 1992). Yet, scholarship probing transnationality is increasingly broad, cuts across disciplines, and is vigorously debated: Roger Waldinger and David Fitzgerald, "Transnationalism in Question," *The American Journal of Sociology* 109, no. 5 (March 2004), pp. 1177-95; Laura Briggs, Gladys McCormick and J.T. Way, "Transnationalism: A Category of Analysis," *American Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (Sept. 2008), pp. 625-648; Paul Giles, "Transnationalism and Classic American Literature," *PMLA* 118, no. 1 (Jan. 2003), pp. 62-77. Within the fields of history and international relations, interest in transnational identities and networks encourages questioning of nation-state paradigms and movement away from state-centered research.

“foreign” and “local.” Their national identification cards and passports declared them as Colombian citizens, but they were much more. They might equally identify or be identified in a regional context as Costeños and Barranquilleros. Many might see themselves as *Caribeños* [people of the Caribbean], a category that implied both foreign and local identity at the same time. Additionally, many of these Colombians were connected to “foreign” nations and cultures through recent (or distant) family ancestry, through family economic activity, and certainly through their voluntary affiliation with the transnational education community then developing around the Colegio Parrish. The identities of the US, British, Dutch, and Norwegian students and families that participated in the founding of the school were equally complex. Like Karl C. Parrish himself, they too defied simple and static categorization as foreigners. Looking inside the campus and classrooms of the Colegio Parrish (and the other American schools on the Caribbean and in the Andes) reveals the cultural complexities of the space between foreign and local.

Connecting the Colegio Parrish with US Cultural Diplomacy

Given the lack of schools in Colombia, contemporary education reforms efforts of Liberals, increasing currency of Pan Americanism, and the closing of the German school in Barranquilla, local Colombian demand for space in the Colegio Parrish almost immediately exceeded supply. It quickly became obvious to local US businessmen whom Rockefeller’s OIAA had enlisted as volunteer advisors that the high demand presented an opportunity for greater US contact with the upper class. If increasing influence among upper-class Colombians was an objective of wartime foreign policy, expanding the young school with US government assistance seemed a logical move. This message filtered up from local US businessmen in Barranquilla, through the US embassy staff in Bogotá, and

to the OIAA in Washington: “When more children can be accommodated, many better class Colombians will send their children to the school.”³² Indeed, with minimal assistance from Washington, this had already begun to happen. By 1947, the student body had grown to 130 students, and over 60% (80 students) were Colombian nationals, and there were long waiting lists for the lower grades.³³

Rockefeller’s OIAA depended heavily on the assistance of US citizens living in Latin America as it formulated and implemented its wartime cultural and educational programs for the region. Based on his own experiences with business projects and investment in Venezuela, Rockefeller understood that locally residing US businessmen were a key resource that could be tapped in each of the other American republics to advise the OIAA on local affairs. Accordingly, volunteer businessmen were recruited to join Coordination Committees (alternately Coordinating Committees) in Latin American capitals and major cities. These committees were charged with advising the OIAA on how best to adapt programs to local realities, coordinating the implementation of programs, and reporting on the effectiveness of OIAA efforts.³⁴ With the exception of Panama, each Latin American country had a national Coordination Committee based in the capital city; it was headed by an executive secretary, who was paid by the OIAA, and it had between five and twelve unpaid members. In most locations, subcommittees for press, radio, and motion pictures worked under the national Coordination Committee. These subcommittees were directed by OIAA employees and had paid staffs comprised largely of nationals of the host-country. During the war years the OIAA had a total paid

³² Sours, “Proposed School Building For The Karl C. Parrish School Barranquilla.”

³³ Appendix 8, Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee on Financial Aid to Schools in Latin America, United States Department of State, 27 June 1947, General Records of the US Department of State, Record Group 59, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland (hereafter NARG 59), 810.42711/7-2347.

³⁴ Rowland, *History of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs*, p. 248.

staff of 687 in Latin America.³⁵ As relates to the Colegio Parrish and Barranquilla, each national Coordination Committee also formed regional sub-committees in the important urban centers of their host country. These regional committees reported directly to the national committee and were comprised of volunteer, locally resident US businessmen. In Colombia, regional subcommittees were formed in Barranquilla, Medellín, Cartagena, Cali, and Bucaramanga with smaller, less formal advisory committees in several other cities.

Membership on the regional sub-committees changed as businessmen and their families were transferred in and out of the region. It is clear from a review of the records of the Colombian regional sub-committees that turnover also increased as the demands of committee work interfered with individuals' business and personal affairs. In Barranquilla, volunteer committeemen were employed by both US and Colombian businesses. Employees of National City Bank of New York, Westinghouse Electric International, Singer Sewing Machine, United Fruit, and the General Sales Corporation served during the course of the war along with US engineers and managers employed by Avianca, Colombian electric utilities, and Barranquilla's Department of Public Works.

Volunteer businessmen who served on regional subcommittees were often married with children. Some had US wives, others were married to Colombians, and still others had married third-country nationals. As parents of children overseas, many of these couples had faced the difficult challenge of securing a US-style and English-language education for their sons and daughters. In the case of Barranquilla, several of members of the regional Coordination Committee had been founders of the Colegio Parrish, were members of its board of directors, and had children in the school. Both

³⁵ Ibid., p. 259.

Thomas Roche, of the General Sales Corp., and Myron Reed, of the Colombian Electricity Company, for example, were Coordination Committee volunteers in Barranquilla; they were US citizens married to Colombian wives and their children were enrolled in Colegio Parrish. Both served simultaneously on the school's board of directors and the regional Coordination Committee. As the fathers of 1939 graduate Rosalvina Roche and 1943 salutatorian Myron Reed Jr., as well as younger children enrolled in the colegio, these businessmen were interested in strengthening the school's academic programs, expanding and improving its property and plant, and building its standing in the community.³⁶ Another primary concern of some of the Coordination Committee members was the addition of a full high school program to the colegio that would allow local US children to remain with their parents in Barranquilla while receiving academic preparation to "carry on in the universities and colleges in the States."³⁷ Through their positions as advisers to the OIAA, businessmen and fathers Roche, Reed and Karl C Parrish, Jr. (son of the school's namesake, and member of both the school board and the Coordination Committee), among others, advocated for direct US government financial assistance to the colegio.

In appealing for aid for the school, the Barranquilla Coordination Committee acknowledged the important benefits a strong US-style school would bring for the local US families. Yet, the weight of its appeal was crafted around wartime concerns and diplomatic objectives --strategic arguments that then held greater currency in Washington. First, in the wake of the closing of the German school, the committee

³⁶ Photographs, "Colegio Karl C. Parrish Class of 1939," KCP MSS; Photo and Caption, "Estudiantes de Honor," *La Prensa* [Barranquilla], 19 June 1943; Commencement Program, "Fifth Commencement, July 17, 1943," KCP MSS.

³⁷ Reed to Richardson, 3 July 1942.

argued that Washington had to seize the moment and supplant German influence in education: “if we wait too long the present emergency may be over and the best opportunity will have passed.”³⁸ Emphasizing the competitive nature of official European cultural diplomacy, which the committeemen had observed for years, they insisted that “unless we provide the essential facilities to implement our good-neighbor policy, some other nation will do it in our stead.”³⁹ They also argued the diplomatic value of personal contact in school communities. Fostering inter-American friendships and promoting mutual understanding among the Colombian upper class, they explained, occurred with little manipulation in classrooms, on playgrounds, on school boards, and within PTAs.⁴⁰

The new building plan proposed by the school board, drafted by the regional Coordination Committee, and presented to Washington by the national Coordination Committee in Bogotá had as a goal the accommodation of 200 students. A sizable lot had been donated by Parrish family in the El Prado neighborhood, and this location ensured that the school would continue to attract the Colombian upper class. Because almost all the US children in Barranquilla were then enrolled in the school, the proposal made clear that 75% of the student body in the expanded school would be Colombian. In contrast to children who had attended the German schools, the Colegio Parrish students would not be taught to respect totalitarianism; from US-style education, they would naturally become “future boosters of Democracy.”⁴¹

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Sours, “Proposed School Building For The Karl C. Parrish School Barranquilla.”

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Andrew Corry had visited the Colegio Parrish in 1942 as part of his tour of Latin American schools. He considered the colegio to be in good standing but “too small” for impact “as a cultural force outside of the community that patronizes it.” He recommended a donation of books to the school’s small library believing that the “cultural force of the school could be strengthened in proportion to the circulation of the books.”⁴² He didn’t anticipate the rapid growth the school experienced during the war. When nothing more than a book grant arrived from Washington, the school community went forward with expansion plans on its own. They issued a local bond and raised the capital necessary for constructing a new building for the school. Private initiative rather than US government assistance drove the expansion. But as the school grew and the Colombian upper class became the majority among the student body, Washington took greater notice and more substantial financial grants to the school began to flow by the end of the war.⁴³

The Colegio Nueva Granada in Bogotá

Transnational Education in the Andes

When the Colegio Karl C. Parrish opened in September 1938, flights between Barranquilla and the Bogotá had made travel and communications between the Andean interior and the Caribbean coast quicker and more convenient for those who could afford the fare. The days of the long journey by river and mountain roads between the two cities were ending for the Colombian upper class and the foreign business and diplomatic communities. Air travel was increasingly part of the culture that Colombian elite shared with North American and European residents of their country.

⁴² Corry, “Memoir,” p. 93.

⁴³ Minutes of the Meeting of the Subcommittee on Financial Aid to Schools in Latin America, United States Department of State, 2 Dec. 1946, NARG 59, 810.42711/12-246; Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee on Financial Aid to Schools in Latin America, 27 June 1947.

Just weeks after the Colegio Parrish opened that September, a US-style school for English-speaking children also appeared in Bogotá. Named the Anglo-American School, it was a collaborative effort between US, British, and Canadian parents resident in the capital, and like the school in Barranquilla it quickly attracted the attention of the Colombian upper class. At the time of the founding of the Anglo-American School, German and French schools were the premier colegios patronized by foreign diplomats, businesses and families in the capital. For US and other English-speaking children in Bogotá, who were fewer in number there than on the coast, home-schooling was a common educational option.

Doris Samper had come to Bogotá from her native US and married a Colombian in 1927. Her children were born at a time when US citizenship did not transfer to those with foreign fathers, but the statutes of 1934 corrected the impediment for her children and those of other US mothers. By 1936, when her children had reached school age and were then considered US citizens, Samper wanted them to receive a US-style education. She anticipated sending them to the US for secondary school --in part to satisfy the residency requirements that remained in effect for some citizens born abroad-- and she wanted that transition to be smooth. Home-schooling was her only option in the Andean city of approximately 300,000, but it was a daunting task for any parent. Samper turned to the Calvert School of Baltimore, Maryland for assistance. Other US parents in Bogotá had previously relied on the Calvert system for home-schooling, but Samper had personal knowledge of the program; her grandfather had been employed correcting papers in the school's Home Instruction Department. Through this department, the school offered programs, curriculum and correcting services via the mail to guide the education of

“children in places inaccessible to good schools, or in foreign countries.”⁴⁴ As Samper assumed the role of teacher, the children of other English-speaking foreign and transnational families joined the classroom in her home. The children of Rockefeller Foundation employees were among the first.⁴⁵

As the US and British diplomatic and business presence in the capital increased in the 1930s, demand for schooling was on the rise and began to over-burden home-schooling mothers like Doris Samper. As had been the case in Barranquilla, parents in Bogotá wanted their children to be prepared for an eventual transition into US, British or Canadian education systems in their home countries. In Bogotá, there were many excellent private schools that welcomed foreign children, and those who had been raised bilingually could enter with ease. Differences in curriculum, however, created potential roadblocks for foreign students who later returned to their home countries to continue their schooling. Complete subjects had been missed, English language skills –written language especially-- were deficient, and college entrance requirements, which were often specific to national curricula, were not met. Another major issue was the school calendar. In Bogotá, the school year began in February and ended in November. Students arriving from or returning to North America or Europe, where the school calendar ran from September to June, faced practical problems related to the start and completion of a school year. (Notably, many of the schools on the Colombian Caribbean, public and private, operated not on the calendar of the interior, but on the September-June academic year that was common throughout the Caribbean and North America.)

⁴⁴ *The Anglo-American School* (Bogotá: 1939), Prospectus 1939, Archives of the Colegio Nueva Granada, Bogotá, Colombia (hereafter CNG MSS).

⁴⁵ Astrid N. Leonard, “Historical Factors Associated with Changes in the American-Sponsored Overseas School in Bogotá, Colombia: A Case Study of Colegio Nueva Granada, 1938-1988” (PhD diss., University of Alabama, 1991), p. 45.

As the number of students needing home-schooling increased, the English-speaking community in Bogotá made the decision to establish a school. A committee of parents was formed in the spring of 1938. It included fathers employed by Shell Petroleum, the Royal Bank of Canada, General Motors, Texas Petroleum, Singer Sewing Machine Company and the Rockefeller Foundation. These fathers joined with Doris Samper and the other wives and mothers who assisted in her home school to consider a more formal approach to educating their children. At their request, several foreign companies agreed to pay start up costs and the initial salaries for the teaching staff.⁴⁶ Thus, in the absence of formal schools sponsored by their home governments, the educational needs of these families were provided through private initiative.

As compared to the coast, the Catholic Church was a potent political force in the capital and throughout the interior. In deference to Church authority, Conservatives had years earlier required approval by the clergy for all new colegios in the country.⁴⁷ Yet on the coast, there had been no pressure on the Colegio Parrish to comply, and they had not. In the interior, it was a different matter. With battles brewing between Liberals and the Church hierarchy over education reform, formal Church approval was less crucial than it had been in the past. Yet as a practical matter, it was both desirable and necessary in a city where the Church wielded tremendous political and cultural influence. Foreign schools traditionally sought and received Church approval, and they used this to attract upper-class Colombians to their programs. The *Colegio Frances* [the French School], for

⁴⁶ “New American School Opened in Colombia,” *New York Times*, 13 Nov. 1938; Leonard, “Historical Factors,” pp. 51-53.

⁴⁷ Helg, *La educación en Colombia*, pp. 70-74.

example, advertised in magazines that their program had “the approval of the National Government and the Distinguished Archbishop Primate.”⁴⁸

That the new Anglo-American School would be English-speaking, nonsectarian, and coeducational (most Colombian schools were sex-segregated following Church educational tradition) made it potentially controversial and, thus, doubly important to secure the sanction of the Archbishop. That the Church campaign against foreign Protestant schools was then generating Catholic anger toward some US-sponsored schools added to the expediency of the prelate’s approval. Doris Samper together with Fred Dever of the Royal Bank of Canada, both the spouses of Colombian citizens, originally requested approval of Archbishop Ismael Perdomo, but they did not receive it. Family connections, however, allowed them to secure it on a subsequent attempt. Dever’s Colombian wife was a cousin of Monseñor Emilio de Brigard who sat high in Church hierarchy and eventually replaced Perdomo as archbishop; family ties allowed Dever to secure formal approval. This move would not stop criticism of the coeducational classrooms of the new school from within the Church and the wider Catholic society in the capital.⁴⁹ Church pressure was constant. In 1947, for example, when the mothers of the PTA convinced the school board to allow girls to wear slacks rather than the traditional schoolgirl skirts and dresses, Catholic reaction was strong around the city. The school board was forced to reverse the change in dress policy out of concern for the

⁴⁸ “Colegio Frances,” *El Scout: Revista Oficial de los Boy Scouts de Colombia*, 11, no. 5 (January 1942), back cover.

⁴⁹ Leonard, “Historical Factors,” p. 51.

reputation of its female students. Slacks were henceforth only allowed for physical education days when classes hiked in the mountains surrounding the city.⁵⁰

For the first year, the parent committee hired a US couple as a teaching principal and teacher: Principal Joseph Hornsby Spear and Maty Welles Spear, a graduate of Wellesley College. This choice was an early example of the tradition of hiring married couples as teachers or administrators that has long been common in American schools abroad.⁵¹ Joined by a Colombian woman and an American wife, the Spears modeled the school on “the best private schools” in US. Their approach was traditional. They continued to rely on the Calvert System, and they expressly rejected “so-called ‘progressive’ methods of education” then popular in the US as “untried theories.”⁵² The school offered enrollments in grades one through six but was prepared to educate enrollees through grade eight. To the Calvert program of reading, writing, math and science, the schools added music, calisthenics, and leatherworking. After the Spears returned to the US, they were replaced by a Canadian teaching couple who converted the school from the Calvert system to an in-house academic program based on the curriculum of the Ontario school system. By 1941, the Anglo-American School formally added a secondary program. The war in Europe was then heating up and direct US participation seemed likely. When war came, British parents were less willing to send their children to secondary schools at home, so the academic program was expanded to meet this new

⁵⁰ Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, Colegio Nueva Granada, 17 May 1948, CNG MSS, Archivos Muertos, F: Ministro de Educación – Varios.

⁵¹ Teaching couples, then as now, were considered desirable hires by boards of directors and school administrators. Moving abroad can be a challenging for any teacher, and couples are generally able to rely on each other for support as they experience cultural shock and become accustomed to their new jobs and surroundings. Teaching couples are less likely to break their contracts.

⁵² *The Anglo-American School*, Prospectus 1939.

demand.⁵³ Soon, both the dangers of and limitations on ocean travel created higher demand for secondary programs from US parents as well. The previously discussed exemption of most US children from a stateside residency requirement together with the expansion of the US diplomatic staff in the city greatly added to the demand for high school instruction.

After the breaking of relations between Colombia and the Axis powers and the subsequent regulation of foreign schools that came under Decree 91 of 1942, the Anglo-American School was forced to change its name; foreign-sponsored schools could not have names that suggested an affiliation with a foreign state. While the school became known as the Colegio Nueva Granada, little else changed. (In Barranquilla, the Colegio Karl C. Parrish did not have to change its name; Karl C. Parrish may have been a foreigner by citizenship, but his name suggested much that was local.) Under the Spears, the school had allowed students only to talk in English and even banned Spanish conversation at recess and punished students for speaking it. However, increasing Colombian enrollments and changing educational philosophy reversed this policy before Decree 91. When it was issued, the school already employed a Colombian to teach the geography, history, and literature of the republic, and thus, the school was in compliance with the most enforced provision of the new law. At the same time, as was also the case in Barranquilla, English remained the primary language of the school. Though a clear violation of the Decree 91's mandate that foreign languages be "auxiliary" and not primary in instruction, teachers at the Colegio Nueva Granada continued "teaching in

⁵³ Ibid.

English without any repercussions.”⁵⁴ As is clear from the case histories of both US-sponsored schools in Colombia, Decree 91 was selectively enforced against German schools. While strengthening the authority of the Ministry of National Education over both Catholic schools run by foreign religious orders and the schools run by foreign Protestants, the newly founded independent and non-sectarian American schools were not targeted.⁵⁵

When the school had opened in 1938 under its Anglo-American name it had just twenty-eight students of whom most were US, British or Canadian nationals. Technically, the only Colombian enrollees at the start of that year were a brother and sister who had previously been living in the US.⁵⁶ Still, there were a number of binational students who did not fit exclusively into just one national category. The US/Colombian children of Doris Samper and the Canadian/Colombian children of Fred Dever, for example, were defined by their family trees and their citizenship statuses as both locals and foreigners. They along with other binational students constituted an ever present minority in American overseas schools.

By the end of the first year, enrollment had almost doubled to fifty-five, and as was the case in Barranquilla, students with Colombian citizenship accounted for most of the growth. Even before the forced closure of Bogotá’s Colegio Alemán created a new pool of students for the Anglo-American School, Colombians were the largest national group enrolled. At the start of the 1941-42 academic year, when the school enrolled a total of 111 students, there were twenty-six US children compared to thirty-eight

⁵⁴ Leonard, “Historical Factors,” pp. 63-70; “Solo en Castellano se Enseñará,” *El Liberal* (Bogotá), 22 Jan. 1942.

⁵⁵ In many Latin American countries that enacted restrictive regulation on foreign schools in the 1930s and 1940s, US-sponsored schools began to flourish at the expense of German schools. For a Brazilian example, see Corry, “Proposed Project Authorization A1- American School of Rio” in “Memoir,” p. 49.

⁵⁶ Leonard, “Historical Factors,” pp. 54-57.

Colombians, eight Canadians, twenty-six Britons, five Dutch, and three Swiss. One Mexican, a Czech, a Romanian, an Assyrian, and a Spaniard rounded out the international student body.⁵⁷ After that year, as the number of students continued to increase, the school moved twice to new locations to accommodate demand. The board of directors took advantage of high profile rental properties that became available in early 1942 due to the war. First, the former German social club --which still had an enormous portrait of Hitler hanging in the entrance-- was rented by the board. The Colombian national police initially provided protection to the colegio at this new site because anonymous threats were received; Nazi sympathizers were blamed. Later, as the demand continued to increase, the colegio moved to a larger location --the former Japanese embassy.⁵⁸

Cultural Transition: From Anglo-American to Colombian-US School

Clearly, the world war facilitated expanding US educational influence among the Colombian upper class at the expense of the Axis powers. Schools and clubs affiliated or associated with Axis nations were forced to close, suspected Nazis were detained or deported, and Axis diplomatic delegations left the country. But the war also ushered in a period of declining cultural influence for the European Allied powers relative to the growing US presence. Many of these nations were forced to drastically decrease or end cultural diplomacy in Latin America as the war at home consumed their attention and their national budgets. Allied diplomatic staffs in Bogotá decreased, businesses recalled employees, and governments called their men home to military service. Against this overall European decline, the US cultural presence in Colombia rose. In the 1940s as

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 63-64.

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 70, 82.

Colegio Nueva Granda transitioned from the fledgling Anglo-American School to an expanding Colombian-US institution, it signaled the broader displacement of European by US culture in the microcosm.

When Bogotá's German school was forced to close in 1942, Jorge Pinzon was one of many Colombian students who eventually transferred to the newly renamed Colegio Nueva Granada. Pinzon immediately missed the sports and physical exercise programs that were emphasized in German education: "Sports as such were definitely not very well organized, a far cry from those in the German school from which I came."⁵⁹ Though physical education was part of the academic program, Colegio Nueva Granada was struggling financially and had neither the resources nor enough students to make an extracurricular sports program viable. What the school did have was a strong sense of community, enthusiasm for the Allied cause, and a culture of democracy. Pinzon remembers that the war was a constant theme at the school, and some were suspicious of him as a former student of Nazi teachers. He remembered being called into the principal's office to be warned that "this was an American school, and that I should be very gentle with the girls, or else."⁶⁰ As events in Europe and on the high seas played out, the administration kept the students abreast of positive developments. When there was news of the sinking of a German submarine, the director "went cheerfully around the upper grade classrooms, writing this event on the boards."⁶¹ Yet the Allied spirit that infused the school community during the war muted a developing academic tension between the US and British models of education and culture. While the colegio's

⁵⁹ Jorge Pinzon, "Memories of CNG in 1942," *Insights* [Alumni Magazine of Colegio Nueva Granda] (May 2005) p. 25.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

program was originally drawn from the best “features of the British and American traditions,”⁶² before the end of the war US educational traditions were more pronounced and this was causing “internal dissension in the school administration.”⁶³ To students, the tensions seemed subtle; as Pinzon recalled, for example, his English teacher was a British national who specifically “tried hard to see that we learned to speak and write British [and not American] English.”⁶⁴ But for the parent community, concerned for the school’s long-term stability and interested in securing financial grants from the US government, the Anglo-American character of the school was increasingly a liability.

In his report for the OIAA, Andrew Corry had emphasized the need for a quality American school in Bogotá explicitly because the opportunity existed to supplant European cultural influence among the upper class: “The need for a school fully equal in quality to the existing French and German schools that have been operating for many years in Bogotá is felt with special keenness at this time, when the cultural ties with Europe, which used to be so strong, have been weakened.”⁶⁵ Corry recognized the Colegio Nueva Granada (it was still named the Anglo-American School at the time of his visit in 1941) as an admirable international collaboration but not a true US-sponsored school. Given the international make-up of the student body, it tended toward international rather than binational instruction and it had no Colombians on its school board. Corry was not convinced that supporting the school was the best approach toward

⁶² Board of Directors to Inter-American Schools Services, 15 June 1945, CNG MSS, Archivos Muertos, File: 1944-1946.

⁶³ “Report on Activities on Interdepartmental Committee in Colombia,” 16 May 1947, NARG 59, 810.42711-IDC-/5-2147.

⁶⁴ Pinzon, “Memories,” p. 24-27.

⁶⁵ Corry, “Proposed Project Authorization A6- Bogotá,” in “Memoir,” p. 63.

the goal of mutual understanding, Pan American unity and strengthened Colombian-US cultural relations.⁶⁶

Members of the Colombian-American Association of New York, a group of Colombian and US businessmen who promoted commercial relations between the two countries, agreed with Corry's assessment and concerns. The association strongly supported the founding of a new American school in Bogotá rather than support of the existing school. Interested in promoting greater economic and cultural links between Colombia and the US, they wanted to address the educational needs of all US and Colombian families working to that end. Because of the colegio's existing and strong ties to British culture, the school did not fit their vision and needs. Members of the association had begun lobbying the State Department/OIAA to support a new school just before the US entered the war. They had even enlisted high-profile US Catholic support in the person of Bishop John O'Hara, the US Catholic Church's special envoy to Latin America.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, in Bogotá, the US Ambassador and the OIAA's national Coordination Committee for Colombia strongly supported the idea of an American school in the capital. Yet they were then unsure whether the Colegio Nueva Granada should receive support or whether a new colegio should be founded. Importantly, at the time, the Coordination Committee in the capital was not as closely linked to the existing school as the regional committee in Barranquilla was to the Colegio Parrish.⁶⁸

During the war, British enrollment declined as a percentage of overall enrollments. Comparatively, Colombian and US enrollment in the course of the war rose

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 62.

⁶⁷ Nelson Rockefeller to Ambassador Spruille Braden, U.S. Embassy/Bogotá, 26 Mar. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1365, F: Interamerican Activities 1942.

⁶⁸ Corry, "Proposed Project Authorization A6- Bogotá," in "Memoir," pp. 62-63.

dramatically. As a result of these changes, the existing school rapidly took on a stronger binational character. As Astrid Leonard has shown in her institutional history of the colegio, school philosophy statements in the 1940s began to emphasize the need to prepare students for entering US rather than US, British, and Canadian universities and colleges. As secondary students had advanced through the upper grades, administrators added a new grade level yearly to accommodate them. Different graduation requirements in the US and British educational systems, however, created curriculum conflicts in programming. With limited resources, the expanding school had to make a decision about which national program it would privilege. Given the decreasing percentage of British students and an increasing Colombian interest in US higher education, administrators began to adapt to the requirements of US education. Though there were concessions to the needs of British students, like the addition of a British history course in grade eleven, secondary programming reflected the school's stronger US rather than Anglo/British character.⁶⁹

The school retained an international student body after the war. In 1946, when student population had reached 235 students, seventy-nine students were Colombian, sixty-nine were US, fifty-three were British, and thirty-four were third-country nationals. Two years later, however, when enrollment had increased by more than 54%, Colombians and US citizens accounted almost all of the growth. Binational students then represented approximately 15% of the student population, and they were US/Colombian, Colombian/British, or British/US children in the main. Children from other nations remained an important minority as well, but the raw number of British students was

⁶⁹ Leonard, "Historical Factors," pp. 89-93.

declining.⁷⁰ Fewer British were now living in Bogotá than before the war, and significantly, for those who remained in the Colombian capital, the Colegio Nueva Granda no longer served their educational needs. Dissatisfied with the US character of the school, the British community would found a new school, the Colegio Anglo-Colombiano in the 1950s.⁷¹

Support from Washington

As the British character of the Colegio Nueva Granada was fading during the war, it garnered greater attention from cultural bureaucrats in Washington and became eligible for financial support from the OIAA. When the war started, the OIAA had channeled funds to independent, non-sectarian American schools on an emergency basis hoping to prop them up to counterbalance Axis schools. Soon the agency began a broader grant program for schools in strategic areas of the region. Based partly on the findings of the Corry report, the OIAA and State Department decided that financial assistance would only be offered to schools that met a strict set of criteria that were developed around the foreign policy goals of mutual understanding and Pan Americanism. To be eligible schools had to have been founded by US citizens, offer a US curriculum, and be non-sectarian and not-for-profit. They had to be independent of business or industry. Enrollment of a high percentage of US children was expected, but a significant portion of the student body had to be nationals of the host-country so as to give the school a binational character. The schools would have to meet the educational requirements and laws of the host country so as to be collaborative educational efforts, and host-country parents had to be well represented on the boards of directors. Schools that met these

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 98.

⁷¹ Colegio Anglo Colombiano, *Anglo 50: 1956-2006* (Bogotá: Puntoaparte Editores, 2006), p. 18-19.

criteria were considered the most likely to foster better inter-American relations between US citizens and influential Latin American elites.⁷²

From the start, the OIAA wanted to avoid the European model of direct government financial aid to overseas schools. In some countries, like Brazil and Argentina, such direct support of schools by foreign governments had been outlawed when the Nazi Auslandsorganisation's school program became known. Rockefeller did not want the American schools to be viewed as an arm of US foreign policy, and stressed that they were to be collaborative, binational and locally controlled. As funding for grants increased in the early 1940s, Rockefeller turned to American Council on Education (ACE), a private educational foundation, for assistance in implementing the aid program. Beginning in 1942, the council handled the distribution of US government grants to American schools in Latin America. The council also created the Inter-American School Service (IASS) to assist schools with hiring and recruitment of teachers and administrators, selection and purchase of teaching materials from the US, annual budgeting and long-term financial planning, and the strengthening of academic programs through professional development.⁷³

As the philosophical and organizational transition of the Colegio Nueva Granada from Anglo-American international school to Colombian-US binational colegio began, crucial support from the US government began to arrive. A \$6400 grant in 1945 was awarded by ACE in part to allow the school to increase salaries so that US teachers could

⁷² Corry, "*Memoir*," p. 31; Minutes of the Meeting of the Subcommittee on Financial Aid to Schools in Latin America, 2 Dec. 1946; Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee on Financial Aid to Schools in Latin America, 27 June 1947.

⁷³ IASS, "Memorandum on the Support of U.S. Sponsored Schools in Latin America by Inter-American School Service of the American Council on Education," 2 Jan. 1947, NARG 59, 810.42711/7-2347.

be retained and new ones could be attracted.⁷⁴ The grant ensured that the school would be hiring more US and not British teachers. That same year, upon request from the school board, IASS recruited two new US teachers and helped hire an “American” director. These new employees were recruited according to the candidate criteria set at the local level by the colegio’s school board. Such criteria reflected the gender norms and racial attitudes within the parent community of the Bogotá school, and IASS applied those criteria in candidate screenings in the US. Female teachers were offered positions at 75% of the salary of a male in the same position, and for the directorship only “white males” without heart conditions (due to the high altitude) were considered.⁷⁵ With IASS acting as a candidate screening service and placement agency, the colegio was able to annually secure new US teachers and administrators that met the local board’s gender and racial criteria. Additionally, the professional services offered by IASS in curriculum assistance and professional development began to connect the school with educators, institutions, and organizations in the broad US education community. At a critical phase in American school development, IASS played a crucial role in fostering transnational dialogue, connections, and community among educators, parents and students throughout the hemisphere.

Conclusion: Colombianization of American Schools

Margarita Dever de Serna, whose Canadian father had been instrumental to the founding of the Anglo-American School, was raised in a Spanish-speaking home. When she entered the school her father helped to establish, she did so without English fluency and it was initially very difficult for her to adapt to the new language of instruction.

⁷⁴ Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee on Financial Aid to Schools in Latin America, 27 June 1947 and 2 Dec. 1946.

⁷⁵ Board of Directors to Inter-American Schools Services, 15 June 1945.

However, as a transfer student from a Catholic girls' school in the city, she loved the more open environment of her new school. She was thrilled that the students did not have to wear uniforms and were given recess time to socialize. After graduating from eighth grade from what was by then called the Colegio Nueva Granada, Margarita went abroad for high school. She went not to her father's homeland, Canada, but to the US, where she attended a Catholic boarding school staffed by nuns. After studying in the US beyond high school, she returned to Bogotá and became a teacher at her alma mater, the Colegio Nueva Granada.

During her early teaching years, Margarita met her husband, Julio Serna. As children, Serna and his brothers had been students in the Colegio Alemán in Bogotá. When it was shut down by the Colombian government in 1942, the Serna boys were sent by their parents to a military academy in the US. Back in Bogotá after graduation, Julio and Margarita met, married and started a family of their own. Based on their own experiences with schools in Bogotá and the US, they continued their traditions of US-style education with their own children. Their siblings did the same. Over the course of the twentieth century, the Dever and Serna families embraced the local American school as their own as did many other upper-class families across Colombia. In the seven decades following the founding of the Colegio Nueva Granda, eight members of Margarita and Julio's extended families would serve on the school board, on the teaching staff, or in the administration. Forty family members would be graduates by the year 2005. More than thirty members of the extended family would still be students at the colegio in that same year.⁷⁶ Like their parents and grandparents before them, the youngest

⁷⁶ Mariluz Restrepo, "Four Generations of the Dever-Serna-Cortes Families at CNG," *Insights* (May 2005), pp. 28-30.

generation was expected to graduate in Bogotá and pursue higher education not in Europe --as had been the tradition of the Colombian upper class when the colegio was founded-- but in either the United States or at home in Colombia.

The establishment of American schools in Colombia assisted locally-residing US families, but as the case of Margarita Dever de Serna suggests, it benefited Colombian and other foreign families as well. Immediately after their founding, the first two independent, non-sectarian American schools in Barranquilla and Bogotá began to attract families of the Colombian upper class. Though both schools remained relatively small through the 1940s, they were growing steadily. Demand for US-style education was high in Colombia, and across the twentieth century as seven more American schools appeared in urban centers, Colombian citizens were clearly driving the growth. Bogotá's Colegio Nueva Granada served 1,400 students by the 1960s. In the capital where the US diplomatic and business presence was strongest, the school retained a US majority, but 44% of the student body was Colombian. Bogotá was, however, the exception to the student body rule. By the 1960s, in each of the three additional schools considered in this study, Colombianization of the student bodies was clear. In Barranquilla, Colombian students were 70% of the 600 strong student body, and there were only slightly more students from the US than third countries. At Medellín, where the Colegio Colón opened shortly after the war, 75% of the students were Colombian, and there were actually more students from third countries (15%) than from the US (10%). At Cartagena, the Colegio Jorge Washington had opened in 1952 with a name that clearly suggested affiliation with a foreign nation and, thus, clearly violated Decree 91. Regardless, the school immediately

developed a Colombian majority and the student body was more than 75% Colombian within its first dozen years.⁷⁷

Excepting the student body of the Colegio Nueva Granada in Bogotá, Colombians were 95% of all children enrolled in American schools in Colombia by the end of the twentieth century.⁷⁸ Across the decades as they grew from small primary-only to large pre- K/12 institutions, these locally controlled, community schools responded to the needs of the populations they served. As a result, their academic programs as well as their school boards, faculties, and administrations were also Colombianized to high degrees. Yet the schools retained strong ties to education communities in the US and deep commitment to close Colombian-US political, economic, and cultural relations. This dissertation argues that transnational educational and cultural communities, including those that developed around American schools in Colombia, are crucial to understanding Latin American-US relations in the twentieth century. Beginning around mid-century, as the US became the global education leader, US models and resources developed as important alternatives to traditional Catholic and European schooling in Colombia. As this study will demonstrate, upper-class Colombians who embraced their local American schools did so to engage with these alternatives; they chose to access the educational, cultural, and economic resources proffered by the US to construct paths toward and across modernity.

⁷⁷ *Association of Colombian-American Bi-National Schools* (Barranquilla: 1966), CNG MSS, Archivos Muertos, F: Col.-Carib-Amer. Schools Association/Pamphlets.

⁷⁸ Adams, "Leadership and School Climate," p. 13.

Chapter Four

Cultural Change in the Colombian Capital

As Colombia's education system began to expand from the 1930s forward, it brought a period of rapid cultural change to the nation. As the traditional upper-class exclusivity of the system was dismantled, higher literacy rates, increasing enrollments in secondary schools, and expansion of university programs accelerated the decline of Church and elite hegemony over national culture. New mass media channels, over which diverse alternatives to elite and Catholic culture were carried, contributed heavily to this process of change. Historically, narrow formulations of Colombianidad were grounded by European high culture, but by mid-century those elite frames gave way before a new sense of modernity. In this process, European cultural influence declined as the US gained new stature as a legitimate cultural producer and a cross-class cultural resource. Analysis of the early evolution of US-sponsored cultural centers in Colombia demonstrates this transformation in a local context. It reveals how transnational educational and cultural communities within the Americas were redefining inter-American relations.

The next two chapters analyze the original US-sponsored cultural center in Colombia, the Centro Cultural Colombo-Americano de Bogotá. This first chapter contextualizes the center's founding and its early development within the broader dynamics of cultural change; the second chapter explores that cultural change in detail via Colombian-US encounters in the programs of the center. This current chapter begins with an example of converging Colombian and US cultural agendas; it demonstrates how

a Colombian librarian and diplomat began to direct US cultural resources toward national educational and cultural reform. It then considers changing notions of culture in Colombia that were facilitating such convergence. Next, the chapter historicizes the earliest US cultural centers in Latin America and articulates Washington's growing enthusiasm for them as a reaction to strong European, and especially Nazi, cultural influence in the region. Finally, the growth in US cultural programming in 1940s Bogotá is analyzed against declining European cultural influence in the city.

Pan Americanism, Cultural Resources and Common Interest

Daniel Samper Ortega was an “engine of Colombian culture.”¹ He was a novelist, historian, librarian, and educator. As director of the Biblioteca Nacional [National Library] in Bogotá throughout the 1930s, Samper used limited resources to build the library's collection and advocate for wider dissemination of Colombian literature among the populace. The literary record of the nation had until then laid scattered in private collections and university libraries accessible only to the elite. To the average literate citizen, it was largely unavailable and unknown. Fueled by new enthusiasm for education reform and increasing literacy in the nation, Samper gathered this literature, edited it, and published it anew in a 100-volume collection. When the Ministry of National Education published the collection a few years later and made reasonably priced volumes widely available to the public, Colombia's literary canon became more widely available.²

In Colombian political tradition, poets, historians, and other men of letters often led the republic as president, served as government ministers, and represented the nation

¹ Armando Samper Gnecco, *Daniel Samper Ortega: motor de la cultura colombiana* (Bogotá: Gimnasio Moderno, 1995).

² Guillermo Hernández de Alba, “Daniel Samper Ortega: Homenaje a su obra,” *Boletín Cultural y Bibliográfico* 4, no. 3 (March 1961), pp. 175-178; Carlos José Reyes, “Daniel Samper Ortega; un visionario de la cultura,” *Boletín de Historia y Antiquedades* 83, no. 792 (Jan/Mar 1996), p. 59.

as diplomats overseas. In the late 1930s, following the tradition, Samper was appointed cultural attaché for the Colombian legation in Washington. Given the energetic Pan Americanism of the era, he was a logical choice for the high-profile assignment. As he accepted his posting to the US capital, Latin America held new prominence in US foreign policy, and Washington's new program of cultural diplomacy was in a crucial formative stage.

Samper believed that better inter-American relations would grow out of increased cultural exchange, but he knew first hand that fostering mutual understanding between the people of Colombia and the US would require a substantial allocation of resources. There were many areas where inter-American cultural resources were lacking, but as a librarian Samper best knew about books and literature. Few books on the US were available to Colombians in Spanish or English. Indeed, Samper's wife had tried to read about the history and culture of the US prior to the couple's departure for Washington, but her searches for reading materials in Bogotá came up empty. Even in the very library of which her husband was director, the premier public library in the nation, she could locate just one book on the US and this dealt with the colonial era. In contrast, books treating European topics were plentiful; histories, literature and other cultural studies of France, Spain, Italy, Germany, and England were abundant in Spanish translation.³ Thus, it became immediately clear to the Sampers that books had a role to play in better cultural relations in the Americas. Translated editions of US history and literature books in Latin American libraries and Latin American editions in the US libraries would increase opportunities for mutual understanding in the hemisphere.

³ This story, told by Samper in Washington, was often repeated by cultural policymakers in Washington as they justified the expenditures of the new cultural relations program with Latin America. US Department of State, *The Cultural-Cooperation Program 1938-1943*, p. 34.

In his new role in the US, Samper fully engaged in the public discourse of Pan Americanism, but he did not cede to Washington the power to define the discourse. Indeed, he was publicly critical of the early US efforts to secure inter-American unity and warned that Washington must earn rather than expect Latin American respect. Pan American rhetoric of mutual understanding, he believed, would always ring hollow in Latin America if true reciprocity and open dialogue were not the basis of inter-American cultural relations. In 1941 he told an audience of Pan American enthusiasts at the University of Chicago...

*You forgot Latin America for centuries, and now you want to win our good will and our markets in a day; but you continue to misunderstand us, thinking that we ought to mold ourselves to your mind and methods instead of trying to mold yourselves to our temperament.*⁴

In Samper's view, US leadership in the hemisphere was a foregone conclusion, but he firmly believed Latin Americans had important roles to play in constructing the new Pan Americanism.

Samper recognized an historic shift taking place as Latin America moved out of the economic and cultural orbit of Europe and increasingly looked north toward the US. He was pragmatic about the shift: "Madrid, in the past, was the distributing granary of ideas and the intellectual center for the meeting of all the former Spanish colonies. In the future, this role will likely be performed by New York."⁵ Acknowledging that the US had "resources, transport and organizations that we lack," Samper argued that Latin American nations would greatly benefit from their emerging economic and cultural alignment with

⁴ Daniel Samper Ortega, "Cultural Relations among the American Countries," in *Inter-American Solidarity: Lectures of the Harris Foundation 1941*, ed. Walter H.C. Cleaves (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941), p. 184.

⁵ Daniel Samper Ortega, remarks at inauguration of cultural center (speech delivered at Centro Colombo-Americano, Bogotá, Colombia), 19 Sept. 1942, typescript copy, *Recordes, Toma 1: Libro Historico, Centro Colombo-Americano, 1942-1988* (hereafter cited as LH1), Office of the Director, Centro Colombo-Americano, Bogotá, Colombia (hereafter cited as CCA/Bogotá MSS).

the US. Because of the US abuses of the past, proceeding cautiously and maintaining a level of skepticism were essential, but Samper believed the whole region would “profit from the knowledge, experience and technique of their older sister, in the same way that all [American nations] have profited from and will continue to take advantage of the age-old European culture.”⁶

During his days in Washington, Samper became convinced that more Latin Americans would have to learn the English language in order to take full advantage of the US resources available to them. French had long been the second language of educated Colombians, but twentieth-century realities brought reprioritization. Earlier generations of Latin Americans had taken up French to learn the “ideas, methods and aspirations that had originated in France,” and they applied them in winning independence and building their nations. Now learning English, he believed, would bring great cultural, political and economic benefits to the modern generations of Latin America.⁷ Returning to Bogotá at the end of his service in Washington, Samper was well prepared to tap into the cultural resources proffered by the US under the new Pan Americanism.

When the first US-sponsored cultural center in Colombia, the Centro Cultural Colombo-Americano de Bogotá [the Colombian-American Cultural Center of Bogotá] opened its doors in September 1942, Samper was a founding member of its board of directors. The Colombo-Americano, as it has since been known locally, was the first of eight US-sponsored binational centers (BNCs) to open in Colombia as part of the new Washington program of cultural diplomacy. Offering language classes and cultural programs to the residents of the capital, the first Colombo-Americano created new spaces

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

where foreign/local encounters played out and the rhetoric of Pan Americanism and mutual understanding was implemented and tested. Speaking for the board at its formal inauguration, Samper expressed optimism that US-Latin American relations had entered a new phase. Based on personal contact with US citizens, he was more enthusiastic about the binational relationship than he had previously been. His experiences in the US representing his nation, observing wartime Pan Americanism, teaching in the university system as a guest lecturer, and participating in cultural activities in communities across the nation, convinced him that a “desire to be helpful” and “sincerity and integrity” were “notable characteristics of the contemporary North American.”⁸

Clearly, Daniel Samper Ortega had a new appreciation for the peoples, cultures, politics, and socio-economic systems of the US. Yet his encouragement of Colombian-US cultural relations through the Colombo-Americano in Bogotá should not be misinterpreted. Samper was not an agent of US imperialism nor was he a surrogate of North American hegemony. He had not adopted a North American lifestyle or mindset while living in the US. He was loyal to Colombia not Washington. Far from encouraging US cultural imperialism or cultural dominance, Samper’s efforts toward establishing the Colombo-Americano represented an appropriation of accessible educational and cultural resources for the benefit of Colombians. Samper was an active member of Spanish, Venezuelan, and Panamanian academies of history and fine arts for similar reasons.⁹ Though he had developed enthusiasm for the new Pan Americanism, Samper was first a Colombian nationalist. His passion was the broad dissemination of Colombian culture and the modernization of the nation, and he saw the Colombo-Americano and its links to

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Percy Alvin Martin, ed., *Who's Who in Latin America: A Biographical Dictionary of Outstanding Men and Women of Spanish America and Brazil*, 2nd ed. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1940), p. 468.

US as helpful toward both of those ends. The times demanded new cultural approaches for strengthening the nation, and to Samper the culturalist, the nationalist, and the modernist, the establishment of the Centro Colombo-Americano de Bogotá was a positive step in that direction.

Colombian Education Reforms and Changing Notions of Culture

The emergence of US cultural centers, American schools, and mass media cultural programs in Colombia took place as Liberal reforms granted new social functions to education and culture.¹⁰ Under the new political formulation, both education and culture would serve as unifying forces in the nation, and their roles as class-specific markers of difference would be reduced. Liberal education reforms that aimed to improve the lives of millions of impoverished Colombians through expansion of education and schooling had the ultimate goal of modernizing the nation. The trend toward urbanization presented unique challenges for schooling, but because most of the population still lived in rural areas (71% in 1938, 61% in 1951) rural Colombia received much of the attention.¹¹ While schools for children and literacy programs for adults took center stage, they were joined by equally intense cultural campaigns aimed at building broad national consciousness among the Colombian people. Such consciousness had long been lacking in Colombia where people more often identified with region than nation. A century of partisan politics and civil warfare had severely restricted the development of

¹⁰ Catalina Muñoz rightly points out that the concept of a social function [*función social*] for culture becomes well established in Liberal cultural policies during the 1930s. Her discussion of the institutionalization of the concept in state cultural programs is particularly helpful. Muñoz, “To Colombianize Colombia,” pp. 56-68.

¹¹ “Población urbana y rural del país,” Cuadro 16, *Censo General de Población: 5 de Julio de 1938*, p. 39; “Distribución de la población por zonas, según el Censo de 1951 (departamentos y territorios nacionales),” *Censo de Población – 1951 (May 9)*, pp. 20-21.

Colombianidad as a unifying force, but the lack of schools in the nation was also a major contributing factor.

Schools play a basic role in educating children about the geography, history, civics and culture of a nation, and in their absence a key arena for fostering national consciousness is lacking. Through the 1920s, while the majority of Colombian children received no formal education at all, many who did attend schools usually completed no more than a year or two at the primary level. As a practical matter, quality primary and secondary education remained accessible only to the children of the upper class. Owing to the strong presence of European religious in the schools attended by these children, elite framing of Colombianidad typically reflected a familiarity and an affinity for European, and especially French, culture. Strong European cultural influences were projected in the books, magazines, and newspapers written by and for the elite, and such narrow framing of Colombianidad contributed to the alienation of the Colombian majority from official versions of their own national culture. Significantly, as Liberal education reformers attempted to create a stronger national consciousness and expand schooling and literacy, strong European influence over Colombian curriculum and instruction was viewed less favorably. Thus, while targeting Nazi influence in Colombia in the short term, Decree 91 of 1942 had also addressed long-term concerns over European influence in the classroom by requiring the teaching of Colombian history, geography, and civics by Colombian citizens.

Alfonso López Pumarejo, who was elected to the presidency twice during Liberal rule and was responsible for stripping the Church of its constitutional role in education, believed a broader-based and unifying national consciousness was essential to

modernization. He hoped such consciousness would allow Liberals to enlist all Colombians in a unified effort towards national progress. Under López, his Liberal predecessors and successors (his terms were non-consecutive), the task of cultural management was vested in the Ministry of National Education.¹² Education ministers were charged with leading the Liberal education reforms and organizing unifying cultural initiatives. But the Ministry of National Education was a revolving door, and ministers, whose appointments were often based on political affiliations rather than professional qualifications or interest, served short terms.¹³ This constant turnover in leadership meant that most of the ministers did not have time to formulate or implement broad initiatives, and as a result, education reform and cultural management were less developed than they might have been.

Peter Wade has observed that in Colombia before mid-century, the “promotion of culture had always meant the promotion of ‘cultured values,’ that is, the cultural activities associated with intellectual European circles and closely connected with formal education and the arts.”¹⁴ This reality was very much evident in the approaches of Liberal governments to education reforms and cultural diffusion in the 1930s, but it is equally clear that notions of culture underwent significant revision before mid-century as education reforms played out. Clearly, ministers and the bureaucracies they led equated education and culture and believed that individuals could acquire the cultured values

¹² Daryle Williams defines cultural management as “an institutionalized, administrative relationship between the state and culture.” Daryle Williams, *Culture Wars in Brazil: The First Vargas Regime, 1930-1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), p. 26.

¹³ While the presidency changed only five times during the sixteen years of Liberal rule, twenty-four different men served as Minister of National Education during those same years. Helg, *La Educación en Colombia*, pp. 224-227.

¹⁴ Wade, *Music, Race, & Nation*, p. 36.

which they lacked through formal education.¹⁵ However, as ministry officials examined the lives of the Colombian majority, who lived in relative isolation, largely in poverty, and without the benefits of formal education, the separation between elite-defined cultured values and the lived realities of most Colombians became obvious. The elite culture that had long been promoted in the nation's schools had limited utility in rural Colombia where poverty set the pattern of daily living. Even as a mass migration of rural Colombians to the nation's cities ensued, elite culture continued to lack relevancy for the majority.

The official cultural programs that accompanied education reforms reflected the various philosophies, passions, and biases of ministers and sub-ministers. By 1940, the ministry's various programs and initiatives in the area of cultural outreach had been drawn together under the organizational umbrella of the Division of Cultural Extension and Fine Arts. This emerging bureaucracy within the ministry funded, sponsored, and collaborated with museums, theaters, art schools, performance groups, and cultural organizations; the combined leadership of these public and private entities formed a cohort of cultural managers charged with the diffusion of national culture. Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, a populist leader who would be assassinated in 1948, was then a rising political force within the Liberal Party and the Minister of National Education. As compared to most leading politicians of his day, Gaitán had risen from modest origins. The son of a bookseller father and school teacher mother, he graduated from the National University

¹⁵ The Ministry of National Education published annual reviews of its education and cultural programs. Though characteristically self-promoting, these reviews articulated the philosophy of the current minister and revealed the continuing currency of traditional cultured values. See for example: *Memoria del Ministro de Educación Nacional al Congreso de 1931*; *Memoria del Ministro de Educación Nacional al Congreso de 1934*; *Memoria del Ministro de Educación Nacional Presenta al Congreso en sus Sesiones de 1936*; *Memoria de Educación Nacional: 1939*; and *La Obra Educativa del gobierno en 1940: la Extension Cultural, Volume III*. Each was published by the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN).

and was awarded a scholarship for graduate study at the University of Rome. While his years in Italy increased his deep appreciation for European high culture, his approach to cultural management was grounded by his middle-class upbringing.

As minister, Gaitán served for just one year, but during that time he proffered a new approach to cultural diffusion. Gaitán accepted the premise that formal education would improve the lives of the Colombian majority and that literacy was the most basic necessity. And believing high culture had a place in the construction of Colombianidad, he did not abandon the promotion of traditional high culture among the populace. Instead, Gaitán called for the “democratization of culture” [*democratización de cultura*]. His call was grounded by two important philosophical shifts with regard to cultural diffusion that were gaining currency as Liberal education reformers confronted the realities of Colombian society. First, more equitable division of the nation’s cultural resources between social classes, between urban and rural communities, and between Andean and peripheral regions was newly desirable. The urban, Andean elite had long held a monopoly over formal educational and cultural programs and as a result “the benefits of civilization have not arrived” [*los beneficios de la civilización no han llegado*] for a large portion of the Colombian people.¹⁶ Greater equity in distribution of resources, Gaitán and Liberal reformers hoped, would begin to correct this imbalance. Second, Gaitán and others began to officially embrace popular culture in its multiple and diverse forms. Because traditional high culture lacked relevance in the lives of most non-elite Colombians, few benefits would come to them from “the acquisition of decorative and vaguely educative knowledge” [*la adquisición de conocimientos decorativos y*

¹⁶ Ministerio de Educación Nacional (hereafter MEN), *La obra educativa del gobierno en 1940: la extensión cultural*, vol. 3 (Bogotá: 1940), p. 13.

vagamente educativos]. Instead, there was new rhetorical emphasis on developing cultural programs around the “actual lives” [*la vida efectiva*] of people --built upon essential needs but also those interests and activities that gave meaning to people’s lives.¹⁷ In practice, the forms of popular culture endorsed by the official cultural bureaucracy were often limited to the realm of folkloric traditions; such forms could be repackaged as authentic Colombian expressions and employed as unifying markers of the new Colombianidad. Excluded from official programming were more contemporary manifestations of local and regional culture especially those considered commercialized, crude or of foreign origin.¹⁸ However, outside official cultural management, the new mass media had already begun to project broader forms of popular culture via airwaves, magazines and film, and this counteracted the restrictiveness of official programming. Thus as Ministry of National Education programs introduced new, officially-sanctioned frames of Colombianidad, an alternative range of customs, festivals, music, and sport also received attention and encouragement through new media channels. The definition of Colombian culture was broadening.

It was within these currents of education reform, democratization of culture and new mass media channels that Washington’s cultural diplomacy appeared in Bogotá and gave rise to new US cultural influence. With the establishment of American schools and binational centers, US cultural resources were more readily accessible in Colombia than ever before. Some members of the elite, like those affiliated with American schools, employed US resources in very personal projects toward the education their children. Others, like Daniel Samper Ortega, seized the opportunity to use the resources in national

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁸ Muñoz, “To Colombianize Colombia,” pp. 304-309. On this point, Muñoz builds on the arguments of Renán Silva in *República Liberal, intelectuales y cultural popular*.

projects of modernization that privileged educational expansion and cultural diffusion. Yet the Colombian elite did not have a monopoly on US resources. Notably, the educational and cultural programs in the Centros Culturales Colombo-Americanos were available to a broad segment of the national population, and the emerging middle and professional classes were the most frequent participants. Examining the early development of the Colombo-Americano Cultural Center in Bogotá reveals growing US cultural influence among non-elite classes.

Spontaneous Presence: US-sponsored Binational Centers in Latin America

Like the independent schools founded by US citizens in Latin America, the first US-sponsored binational cultural centers (BNCs) in the region began without formal assistance from the US government. The first was founded in Argentina in 1927 as the Instituto Cultural Argentino-Norteamericano [Argentine-North American Cultural Institute]. A group of Argentine businessmen, educators and intellectuals, most of whom had business or cultural connections in the US, founded the institute with hopes of strengthening ties between the two countries. Through the efforts of the Pan American Union, the organization initially received encouragement and assistance from private US foundations including the Institute of International Education and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.¹⁹ Between 1927 and 1940, eight other BNCs were founded in the region: five were in Brazil, while Chile, Uruguay, and Honduras each had one. All were non-profit entities. As in the Argentine case, growing interest in these cultural centers in Latin America was in part a function of the increased commercial relations between the US and individual nations, cities, communities, and industries of the region. However, the diplomatic emphasis on cultural exchanges that grew out of the

¹⁹ “The Instituto Cultural Argentino-Norteamericano,” *Hispania* 20, no. 4 (December 1938), pp. 235-242.

conferences of the Pan American Union at Montevideo in 1933 and Buenos Aires in 1936 facilitated the process as well.²⁰

Most of the early BNCs were founded by Latin American nationals who had been educated in US universities. They viewed the US favorably, associated it with modernity, and wished to maintain their personal cultural connections with it. At their founding, many of these centers also enlisted the support of locally residing US citizens, who saw the institutes as a way of maintaining ties with their homeland. Additionally, some of the earliest centers were established through the efforts of local Latin American governments themselves in the interest of stronger relations with the US. What is noteworthy about these early centers is that they were always privately funded. They relied on contributions from nationals of the host country, local businesses, US expatriates and US firms with a presence in the local economy to provide funding for exhibits, social gatherings, lectures and courses in US culture and language.

FDR's State Department took interest in the existing BNCs beginning in the late 1930s. As soon happened with independent American schools in Latin America, the international climate made the institutions attractive sites for the promotion of Pan Americanism and hemispheric unity. Initially, the State Department offered cultural publications to boost the small libraries which many of these centers maintained, but little in the way of financial support was offered to them. It was not until Rockefeller's OIAA became aware of European-sponsored cultural centers in Latin America and concluded that the US was losing influence in the region that official financial support to BNCs began to flow. When the second center in Latin America was founded in Rio de Janeiro

²⁰ Louis P. Falino, Jr., "The Binational Center and US Foreign Policy," *The North – South Agenda Papers*, no. 19 (May 1996), p. 6.

in April 1937, for example, it joined similar British, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Argentine cultural institutes that had previously been established in that city. It soon became clear, however, that the privately funded US cultural institutes could not compete for public attention with the more substantially endowed European cultural centers. Most European cultural centers were official governmental organizations of European foreign ministries and received substantial subsidies from them. Language classes were their most common activity, but cultural performers, musicians, lecturers, and art exhibits sent from Europe also drew large Latin American audiences.²¹

The eight existing US-sponsored cultural centers in Latin America gave the US a formal cultural presence where it had been lacking. And because these BNCs were privately funded and came at no cost to the US taxpayer, they conformed to the traditional US preference for private over government initiative. However, as tensions mounted in Europe and Washington increasingly became concerned with inter-American unity, ceding cultural competition to European powers, whether Axis or Allied, grew less palatable. Cognizant that subsidized European centers were providing more credible programs than the private US-affiliated BNCs could afford to offer and ever concerned about Axis influence in the region, the OIAA initiated a program of direct financial support for these institutions in the early 1940s.²² In addition to supporting existing centers, the OIAA encouraged and funded the founding of new ones in strategic locations. The Centro Cultural Colombo-Americano de Bogotá was one such center.

By 1943, a total of twenty US cultural centers had been established in Latin America. Throughout the war years, as most German, Italian, and Japanese cultural

²¹ Ibid.

²² US Department of State, *The Cultural Cooperation Program 1938-1943*, p. 8.

centers were forced by host-country governments to close, US-sponsored BNCs continued to appear and prosper. By 1945, there were twenty-seven such BNCs in Latin America receiving US subsidies, and these institutions had opened an additional 20 branches in other neighborhoods or nearby cities. Significantly, the Latin American trend of establishing these centers went global with the Cold War, and at the close of the twentieth century, there were over 170 US-sponsored BNCs worldwide, with the largest regional concentration still in Latin America.²³

US government funding of these centers originally began as grants from the wartime budget of the OIAA. Technically, the OIAA transferred lump funds to the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), a private foundation which initially took responsibility for evaluating and disbursing the grants. Such a funding scheme avoided the impression that BNCs were direct dependencies of Washington and reinforced their lack of official status within the US government. Both the OIAA and the State Department continually asserted that these centers were independent, locally controlled institutions; they stressed that local efforts were behind the BNCs and that they had “grown up spontaneously.”²⁴ Additionally, ACLS oversight of grants allowed many of them to avoid conflicts with laws in some of their host-countries that banned clubs and organizations from receiving direct subsidies from foreign governments. As discussed earlier, such laws had first been implemented by Vargas in Brazil in the late 1930s. Other

²³ Falino, Jr., “The Binational Center and US Foreign Policy”; US Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, “English Language Programs Abroad: I - Binational Centers,” <http://www.state.gov/education/engteaching/eal-elp.html> [accessed 1 October 2007].

²⁴ This booklet was sent by the OIAA to Coordination Committees throughout Latin American to explain the full scope of activities of the office. *The Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs* (Washington: The Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, 1941), p. 10, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1362, F: Bogotá Correspondence.

countries soon followed suit and issued similar bans simultaneously with their closings of German, Japanese, and Italian schools.

Rockefeller considered BNCs invaluable sites where negative stereotypes of the US could be challenged, transnational cultural connections fostered, and mutual understanding achieved. And while he valued the spontaneity with which the earliest centers appeared, it is clear that the OIAA and, later, the State Department began to play a more active role in supporting or encouraging the spontaneous interest of Latin Americans in establishing new centers. Still, as the new centers were established throughout the 1940s, they remained local institutions. Indeed, the OIAA and State Department only offered grants to those that were grounded in local initiative. In these early years, both privately and publicly, US cultural diplomats and policymakers stressed that Washington did “not control or wish to control cultural centers.”²⁵ Throughout the 1940s, centers deemed worthy of US government support met specific criteria. They had to be run by binational boards of directors with both Latin American and US membership. In addition to English language instruction, they had to offer cultural programming that was grounded in reciprocity and would increase understanding of both host-country and US cultures; programs had to reach the “emerging middle class” while also appealing to intellectuals of the host country; evidence was required that suggested the promise of economic self-sufficiency of each center; all services had to be offered on a democratic basis with every effort made to avoid class restrictions; centers had to abstain from activities that might be interpreted as propaganda for the US government;

²⁵ Edmund Murphy, “Departmental Policy in its Program of Assistance to Cultural Centers,” 31 March 1949, p. 39, NARG 59, 810.42711/3-3149.

and funding would only be granted if the particular center wielded cultural influence (in the direction of mutual understanding) in its local and regional community.²⁶

By 1943, Rockefeller argued that BNCs together with American schools should be supported on a long-term basis and not simply for the duration of the war. The State Department agreed and assumed responsibility for financial and other resource assistance to these cultural institutes as well as to the increasing number of American schools.²⁷

While Congress pressured the State Department to ensure that all cultural centers quickly became self-supporting, it continually approved funds for ongoing support when this did not happen. Arguments that BNCs were “strong-holds of inter-American relationships” and that they “were sponsored largely by nationals who are friendly to us” proved effective in winning consistent congressional support throughout the war and well into the Cold War.²⁸

In most centers, English teaching quickly evolved as the primary function, but all had cultural programs to supplement the language classes.²⁹ In the first decade, the US government paid the salaries of center directors (who were always US citizens) and additional administrators, and it provided salaries for a few teachers from the US. In addition to covering much of the startup costs for centers opened during the war, Washington paid up to 20% of the annual operating expenses as well. Local revenue came from English classes, but in the interest of keeping tuition and fees low so as to attract the middle class, Washington’s salary and operating budget subsidies were essential.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 27, 36-39, 40-43.

²⁷ Hull, testimony, *HR2599*, 8 February 1943, p. 7.

²⁸ Schurz, testimony, *HR2599*, 15 February 1943, p. 339.

²⁹ Dorothy Greene and Sherly Goodman Esman, *Cultural Centers in the Other American Republics*, Department of State Publication 2503 (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 2.

Reflecting a high-level of goodwill afforded the US as it took the lead in the fight against fascism, much of the Latin American press positively reported on the appearance of each new BNC. Such coverage allowed US educators, who directed and staffed the centers, and diplomats to explain the US philosophical approach to cultural relations to the host community. A clear distinction was usually drawn to distinguish the US approach from that of existing European-sponsored cultural centers. Carl Sauer, the first director of the Centro Cultural Colombo-Americano in Bogotá articulated the contrast for the Bogotá press: while European nations'...

*principal and, perhaps, only concern is making known their culture and introducing their knowledge in this country, to influence in one way or another the Colombian national culture, our desire is diametrically opposite. We don't aim to do such a thing.*³⁰

Sauer, like other BNC directors and US cultural diplomats across the region, consistently stressed that reciprocity was the basis of US cultural policy and asserted that the US had as much to learn from Latin America as Latin America had to learn from the US. While the rhetoric of mutual understanding through reciprocity was emphasized in cultural center literature as well as in internal and external policy documents of the OIAA and State Department, what is most significant is that this philosophy also structured the operation of most centers. Because the institutes were not dependencies of the US government, had independent boards of directors composed in the majority by nationals of their host countries, and were expected to focus as much on local as US culture, US BNCs develop very differently than their European counterparts.

³⁰ “Un Brillante Realidad Son Los Institutos Culturales Americanos,” *El Liberal* (Bogotá), 12 December 1942.

Founding the Center at Bogotá

As occurred in other areas of the hemisphere, local nationals initiated the campaign to establish a BNC in Bogotá. In 1939 on a trip to the US, Colombian Jorge Obando Lombana met with representatives of the State Department to discuss the founding of a binational cultural center in Bogotá. Obando was a member of the Colombian-American Chamber of Commerce, an organization founded jointly by Colombian and US businessmen in the 1920s as commercial relations between the two nations were increasing. The organization had close ties to the Colombian-American Association of New York which was then advocating for an American school in Bogotá. At the time of Obando's meeting in Washington, the new US program of cultural diplomacy was not yet in place so no official assistance could be offered. Still, the State Department encouraged this private initiative. Back in Bogotá, and with the assistance of the local members of the chamber, Obando formed the *Asociación Cultural Colombo-Norteamericano* (ACCN or Colombian-North American Cultural Association) in July 1940. The founding committee of the ACCN was constituted by six Colombians and three US businessmen who resided in Bogotá.³¹ Members made little progress toward the establishment of a cultural center.

As Europe went to war and Washington's concern with Axis cultural influence in the Americas heightened, the local efforts toward founding a cultural center received a boost from the OIAA's coordination committee in Bogotá. As residents of the capital, the US businessmen who volunteered for the committee were well aware of formal European cultural activity around them. As business travelers, many were also aware of the centers

³¹ Gloria Valencia de Acosta, "El Centro Colombo-Americano de Bogotá: su Constitución, Historia y Realizaciones, 1942-1992," 1992, CCA/Bogotá MSS, Folder: Historia Centro Colombo-Americano.

sponsored by US citizens in Brazil and other regions of the continent. Convinced that a cultural center offered the best approach for promoting mutual understanding and fostering Pan Americanism on a long-term basis, the coordination committee called on the OIAA and the State Department to establish a center in Bogotá. While the committee believed that the ACCN was committed to the project, they felt that it was not “sufficiently well organized to launch a cultural institute.”³² They strongly suggested the appointment of new committee to steer the project. In Washington, Rockefeller’s OIAA was concerned that the project remain a local initiative and preferred that Colombian spontaneity drive it. Only after Obando and other members of the ACCN agreed to form part of a new board of directors did the OIAA approve a grant of \$20,000 to cover start-up and operational costs for the first year.³³ This was an impressive level of funding for the era. Simultaneously, the nascent center received a strong endorsement from Colombia’s Minister of National Education, who declared he was “enthusiastic for collaboration.”³⁴

Subsequently, US national Robert Parrish (brother of Karl C. Parrish for whom the new English-speaking colegio in Barranquilla was named), the director of a Colombian mortgage bank and a coordination committee member, was elected president of the board of this new institute. It was renamed the Centro Cultural Colombo-Americano. Though Parrish initially headed the board, it had a Colombian majority from the start with seven Colombian and three US members and the presidency thereafter

³² Edward H. Robbins, Monthly Report on Present Status of Projects and Requests for Colombia, 30 May 1942, p. 2, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1377, F: Project Reports 1942-Feb. 1943.

³³ Kenneth Holland to Robert Parrish, 22 January 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1361, F: Colombian American Center.

³⁴ Acta #3 de Centro Colombo-Americano [minutes of the meeting of the board of directors, hereafter Acta #], 18 June 1942, *Libro de Actas de Centro Colombo-Americano - Bogotá 1942* (hereafter Actas1), CCA/Bogotá MSS.

always passed to a Colombian.³⁵ The board approved statutes for the cultural center that explicitly defined its objectives: to teach Spanish and English courses employing native-speaking professors; to offer business courses and other programs to meet educational needs of the community; to create an examining body to award diplomas; and to foster a “wide understanding of the intellectual and artistic production of Colombia and the United States” via a library, conferences, art exhibits, concerts, and translation of educational materials. Additionally, the statutes explicitly stated that the center would be “removed from all manner of speculation and business.”³⁶

The Colombo-Americano first opened in the city center in a house rented by the board from its owner, the wife of President López. The capital was then growing and extending north and south along the high mountain plain of the *Sabana de Bogotá*. Many of the downtown homes of the upper class were then being converted to businesses or divided up into apartments to accommodate a growing middle-class workforce in the city center. Inaugurated in September 1942, the Colombo-Americano appeared on the cultural stage of the city with fanfare typical for a diplomatic capital. Yet, for an institute that would soon be dominated by the middle class, the formal inauguration and gala had an elegant and elite feel. The 300 invited guests and their spouses included the foreign diplomatic delegations of the capital, Colombian government officials, sub-officials of the Ministry of National Education, and owners and representatives of local Colombian and US businesses.³⁷ By the date of the inaugural, the US had been at war with the Axis powers for eight months, and Colombia had declared war on Germany two months earlier. Not surprisingly, the inaugural speeches framed the founding in the rhetoric of

³⁵ Valencia de Acosta, “El Centro Colombo-Americano de Bogotá.”

³⁶ Acta #1, 18 April 1942, Actas1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

³⁷ Acta #6, 10 Sept. 1942, Actas1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

Pan American unity and celebrated the day as a cultural triumph for democracy over fascism and totalitarianism. Typical were the fulsome words of US Ambassador Arthur Bliss Lane, who called the center a “flower of a grand international ideal” and toasted cultural cooperation in the Americas while lamenting that “so many parts of the world are found subjugated to brutal slavery, as much physical as intellectual by Nazi and Japanese oppressors.”³⁸

Extensive and positive press coverage announced the opening, reprinted speeches verbatim, and encouraged the public to visit the center. Indicative of the high interest the center generated among the city’s emerging professional population, over 3,000 people visited the center during a two-week open house period that followed the formal inaugural. Most prominent among the curious visitors were secondary and university students, educators, journalists, government bureaucrats, military officers, employees of local businesses and members of the judiciary.³⁹ Such occupational groupings, which disproportionately benefited from expanding secondary and university educational options in Colombia, formed the base of the new middle and professional classes.⁴⁰

The enthusiasm with which members of professional and middle classes embraced the Centro Cultural Colombo-Americano signaled an important paradigm shift in Colombian society. Constructing their own life paths and confronting modernity with these resources, non-elite Colombians were developing greater familiarity with US culture. In contrast to traditional elite identification with and promotion of European high culture, the middle and professional classes gravitated towards US cultural models. As

³⁸ “Oficialmente se inauguró ayer el Centro Colombo-Americano,” *El Tiempo* (hereafter *ET*), 20 Sept. 1942.

³⁹ David Richardson to Nelson Rockefeller, 28 Sept. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1361, F: Colombian American Center.

⁴⁰ On defining the Colombian middle class at mid-century see: Palacios, *Between Legitimacy and Violence*, pp. 179-180; Abel Ricardo López, “A Beautiful Class, An Irresistible Democracy” (PhD diss., University of Maryland, 2008).

they did so, European cultural influence in Colombia was displaced and US cultural influence spread. Elites participated in this process, and as the Colombianization of American schools indicates, sectors of the national elite were also increasingly drawn to the US as a cultural alternative. The next chapter articulates the cross-class cultural shift away from European and toward US culture by analyzing foreign/local encounters within the Centro Cultural Colombo-Americano de Bogotá. Before proceeding, however, it is important to consider the changing European cultural presence in the Andean capital during the 1930s and 1940s.

Cultural Competition: European and US Culture in the Andes

In 1939, as the local group of Colombian and US residents began working to establish a formal US-sponsored cultural center in Bogotá, the German diplomatic mission regularly sponsored cultural activities in local theaters as well as in the capital's German school and club. Germans had less cultural dominance in the Andean interior than they had on the Caribbean coast because the national capital had a large diplomatic community with representatives from across the globe. But as a community, German residents still had a strong presence. The German cultural center, a section within the diplomatic mission, offered free German language instruction in the capital. Courses were offered in the evenings at the Colegio Alemán and promoted in front page newspaper advertisements that asked "Do You Want to Learn or Practice German?"⁴¹ Performances by classical musicians, lectures by German philosophers, and the donation of German literary classics in Spanish translation to schools and libraries increased

⁴¹ Advertisement, "Colegio Alemán de Bogotá," *ET*, 19 Feb. 1940.

Berlin's cultural visibility in Bogotá.⁴² However, as the Auslandsorganisation cloaked German cultural activity in Nazism's pomp, symbolism, and reverence for *el Fuehrer*, the interest and tolerance of Bogotanos and their national government decreased.⁴³ With the breaking of diplomatic relations between Bogotá and Berlin after Pearl Harbor, the subsequent closings of the Colegio Alemán and the Club Alemán in Bogotá, and the detainments and deportations of many German residents of Colombia, formal German cultural activity came to a definite halt. Not until the rehabilitation of Germany was under way in the early years of the Cold War would a formal German cultural center appear in the Colombian capital and reestablish cultural programming.

At the same time, an effort by Imperial Britain was underway to institutionalize its own cultural presence in the Andean capital. The British diplomatic mission in Bogotá had long promoted the high culture of the empire with lectures and publications celebrating British language and literature. It took a more formal approach in the 1930s as London grew concerned with anti-British propaganda it attributed to Germany and Italy. The British Council, a division of the British Commonwealth and Foreign Office, had been founded in London in 1934 expressly to spread British culture and language and to expand and improve the nation's cultural relationships around the globe. Building understanding of British foreign policy was one of the organization's stated objectives.⁴⁴ The nation maintained a sizeable empire at the start of World War II and had long been engaged in English language teaching in the educational institutions of its colonies. With the establishment of the British Council, however, the Foreign Office signaled its interest

⁴² In a survey of Latin American libraries, the State Department found many more books in German than English available to the public. Charles Thompson, testimony, *HR2599*, 15 Feb. 1943, p. 321.

⁴³ Freidman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors*.

⁴⁴ Robert Phillipson, *Linguistic Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 138-139.

not only in promoting the King's English but in showcasing the cultural achievements of his subjects. Significantly, the Council planned a stronger British cultural presence not only within but outside the empire as well.⁴⁵

Through the British legation in Bogotá, the Council sponsored lectures and musical performances around the capital. When the directors of the Council formally visited Colombia in 1939, they signed a cultural agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Relations and Ministry of National Education. Based on that agreement, it brought several individuals from the United Kingdom to teach English in Colombian national schools. Each teacher was paid by the British government, but they were assigned a teaching position in a colegio or a university in Bogotá at the discretion of the Colombian government. In the evenings, these same teachers formed the staff of the new Instituto Cultural Colombo-Británico [The Colombian-British Cultural Institute] which was inaugurated in Bogotá in March 1940. The institute opened several months before planning began to establish the Colombo-Americano.

The Instituto Cultural Colombo-Británico initially offered courses in the English language (for individuals, groups, and children), British Literature, business correspondence and shorthand. A library carrying books and periodicals in English was available to members. The institute had a board of directors composed of seven members, and a majority of four were prominent Colombian citizens; Mariano Ospina Pérez, who would be elected President of Colombia in 1946 when Conservatives regained power, was an original member of the board. By 1941, new branches of the institute had opened in Medellín, Barranquilla, Cali, and Santa Marta. All of these centers would close in the years following the war, victims of post-war recessions and budgetary cuts in the Foreign

⁴⁵ Frances Lonsdale Donaldson, *The British Council: The First Fifty Years* (London: J. Cape, 1984).

Office, but while they were open, they annually attracted increasing numbers of students. By 1946 the Council's institutes had approximately 1,200 students in Bogotá and an equal number enrolled among its four regional centers around the country.⁴⁶ Comparatively, the Centro Cultural Colombo-Americano in Bogotá had 1,000 students in that same year.⁴⁷

Subtle rivalry at the local level between the various Colombo-Americanos that opened across the country and the cultural institutes of the British Council is evident throughout this study. However, given these organizations' shared mission of teaching a common language as well as the strength of the US-British alliance during World War II and the Cold War, their competition for students and cultural influence in Colombia never broke the public face of Anglo-American unity.⁴⁸ As demand for English language instruction exploded in Latin America across the twentieth century, both US cultural centers and the institutes of the British Council found sizeable student populations to serve.

That BNCs like the Colombo-Americano were not dependencies of the US government marked an important distinction from the British and other European cultural centers in Bogotá. Like the Colombo-Americano, the various British cultural institutes had boards of directors with strong Colombian representation, but these centers were not autonomous and locally controlled because the managing director of each institute was a dependent employee of the crown. In comparison, the managing directors of US-sponsored cultural centers were private citizens, who were contracted by the local boards.

⁴⁶ The British Council, *The British Council en Colombia* (Bogotá: The British Council Colombia, 2000), pp. 18-20; Arthur Montague, "The Council en Colombia," *The Monthly Review of the British Council* (July 1946).

⁴⁷ "El Centro Colombo-Americano," *Cromos*, 14 Sept. 1946, pp. 26, 56.

⁴⁸ Kiley Taylor, "Anglo-American Teamwork in Bogotá," *El Liberal (Bogotá)*, 26 November 1942. In 1942, the "American" community in Bogotá was estimated at 500 and the British community at 250.

They were drawn heavily from academia and the field of education more specifically. In contrast to both the directors and teachers of the British institutes, they were not government employees. They answered not to Washington but to the local board.

A second crucial distinction was the emphasis placed on cultural reciprocity in the new US-sponsored BNCs as compared to British and other European institutes. Because they prized European high culture, Colombian elites were very receptive to French, Italian, Spanish, German and British cultural diplomacy which aimed less for cultural reciprocity (for mutual exploration of both their own and Colombian culture) and more to disseminate their own cultures. The US consciously took a different approach. As Washington began to assist the first BNCs in Latin America, commitment to such reciprocity was a practical necessity. Given the history of US intervention in the region, a cultural approach similar to the British or Germans would have left the centers especially vulnerable to charges of cultural imperialism. Educators and cultural diplomats involved with these centers were sensitive to such charges and constantly reiterated their aversion to imposing culture. During World War II, Nazism was most often the foil against which they distinguished the US approach: “the Axis powers are trying to bring about a cultural death of the peoples they conquer, in order to facilitate their political assimilation.”⁴⁹ A few years later, Soviet Communism would become the new foil. Still, the US very openly distinguished its approach to cultural diplomacy from that of its allies as well.

When US assistance to BNCs began in the 1940s, demonstrable cultural reciprocity became a criterion for receiving financial grants. More than for the purpose of neutralizing charges of cultural imperialism, Washington’s commitment to such

⁴⁹ William L. Schurz, “The Cultural Relations Program of the Department of State” (speech delivered at opening of the circulating library, Centro Colombo-Americano de Bogotá), 9 March 1943, typescript copy, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

reciprocity was grounded by its goal of fostering hemispheric unity. Cultural programs became an arena for exploring not simply the cultural divide that separated US and Latin America but those cultural bridges that linked them as well. Reciprocal celebration and exploration of broadly defined American cultural forms showcased shared histories, geographies and philosophies of government along with common interests, values, and aspirations among the peoples of the hemisphere. These practices encouraged Latin American and US nationals to negotiate the meaning of Pan Americanism for themselves. Significantly, a common and explicit assertion of those participating in the discourse of Pan Americanism at the BNC level was that modern American cultures were no longer defined by their European roots.

In Spain's former American colonies, Hispanidad --in its cultural rather than political formulation-- constituted a dominant cultural force. Sharing language, religion, history and traditions with Spain, many Latin Americans had cultural affinity for their former mother country. But beginning during their independence movements, Latin American leaders had also turned to France for inspiration, philosophy, and ideology to guide their political separation from Spain. Just as their North American neighbors had done in establishing their own republic, they borrowed from Paris those republican philosophies that their monarchical mother country did not offer. Over time, France developed as a cultural counterweight to Spain. Throughout the nineteenth century, French culture was embraced by many in Latin American ruling classes as modern and worthy of emulation. French language, arts, philosophy and education were considered the height of culture. In the Colombian case, as detailed earlier, French influence among the upper classes was especially pronounced; the dominance of French religious orders

within the nation's secondary schools secured the familiarity of the elite with things French.

In Bogotá, the French diplomatic mission had long sponsored cultural activities in theaters, universities and schools that appealed to elite cultural tastes. The capital's prominent Colegio Francés (renamed Colegio Pasteur to comply with Decree 91 in 1942) also served as an important venue for French cultural activities. A more formal French cultural center was planned in 1936, when an agreement was signed by the Ministry of National Education and the French diplomatic legation to found an institute of French "high culture" in Bogotá.⁵⁰ Escalating tensions in Europe and the eventual outbreak of war, however, drained French resources and the center was not established until the mid-1940s.

When the cultural center, the Alianza Colombo-Francesa [Colombian-French Alliance], was inaugurated at Bogotá in 1944, Paris was still occupied by Germany. The new institute, like each Alliance Française [French Alliance] around the world and similar to the Centros Colombo- Americanos, was founded as an independent cultural institute at the local level. While chapters of the Alliance received an annual subsidy from the French government, they relied heavily on local efforts of French residents abroad, foreigners of French ancestry, and Francophiles of the host country to operate and support the institute. Like the Colombo-Americanos and the institutes of the British Council, the Alianza Colombo-Francesa enlisted local support through a board of directors constituted in part by nationals of the host-country. But in contrast to the US BNC and similar to its British counterpart, the Alianza Colombo-Francesa was focused

⁵⁰ MRREE to MEN, 12 Dec. 1948, "Correspondence con el Ministerio de Educación Nacional: 1947-48," 709/92/118, AMRE, Sección Primera, AGN.

exclusively on the goal of spreading its national language and culture. Indeed, as David Gordon has shown, the growth of the Alliance Francaise around the globe beginning in the late nineteenth century was an official French reaction to the decline of the nation's linguistic and cultural influence. Particularly after World War II, as France lost its empire and English replaced French as the language of diplomacy and business, Paris expanded the Alliance Francaise network in hopes of maintaining its cultural influence through language.⁵¹ By the end of the twentieth century, there were 1,300 chapters of the Alliance Francaise across the globe including more than 100 in the US.⁵²

When France was overtaken by Hitler's forces, Eduardo Santos was president of the Colombian Republic. For a quarter century before assuming the presidency, he was managing director of this family's newspaper, *El Tiempo*, Colombia's Liberal newspaper and the national newspaper of record. Santos was a Francophile who had "spent a good part of his adult life in Paris," and his staunch support of the US efforts against the Axis reflected a strong interest in saving France.⁵³ But his advocacy of Pan American unity and US hemispheric initiatives during the war also signaled his willingness, and the general willingness of Colombians of both parties, to embrace the doctrine of the Polar Star. Under the doctrine, which was first enunciated by Conservatives in the 1920s, Colombian leaders accepted US economic and political hegemony in some areas in exchange for the benefits that came with it.⁵⁴ From that decade forward, in economic and political affairs, Colombia's ties to Europe were loosening as those with the US were

⁵¹ David C. Gordon, *The French Language and National Identity: 1930-1975* (The Hague: Mouton, 1978).

⁵² Alliance Francaise de Washington, "About Us: About the Alliance Francaise," <http://www.francedc.org/en/About.aspx> [accessed 1 February 2008].

⁵³ Bushnell, *The Making of Modern Colombia*, p. 194.

⁵⁴ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society*, p. 280.

tightening. And by the time of the next world war, this decline was as obvious in cultural relations as economics and politics.

As Bogotá's Alianza Colombo-Francesa appeared in 1944, change was refashioning cultural dynamics in the capital. Elite and Catholic hegemony over national culture was breaking down under the weight of modernity. Through radio, film, photography, and print media, the new cultural trends of the popular and middle classes became known to the nation and challenged elite construction of Colombianidad. As more Colombians gained voice in the discourse and practice of national identity, intellectuals became "marginalized in their traditional role as shapers of opinion," and the power of the Church to filter national culture was forever weakened.⁵⁵ In this process, French and other European high culture that had held so much appeal to the elite was not rejected, but it enjoyed a less privileged position in the Colombian capital and around the nation.

On one level, Colombia was experiencing a broadening of national culture that decreased the currency of imported European high culture and looked anew at regional Colombian cultural forms for inspiration. Regional music and dance, especially, found wider audiences outside their traditional geographic confines; Costeño music, for example, was nationalized as the radio and recording industries sent warm Caribbean sounds to receptive audiences in the cool Andean interior.⁵⁶ On another level, foreign influence on national and regional cultures remained strong, but a significant shift was evident. Popular and middle-class Colombian cultures increasingly responded to foreign influences that emanated not from Europe but from within the Americas. Beginning in

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 342.

⁵⁶ Wade, *Music, Race, & Nation*.

the middle decades of the century, “Argentine tango, Mexican rancheras, the Cuban-Mexican bolero... Afro-Caribbean dance music ... soap operas and humor programs from pre-Revolutionary Cuba” all found enthusiasts among non-elite Colombians. And gradually over the course of that century, as Safford and Palacios assert, US popular culture became the “archetype of mass culture in Colombia.” Because US popular culture often reflected “egalitarian values,” it offered non-elite Colombians “a healthy counterweight to the high culture of the traditional dominant classes.”⁵⁷

As detailed in subsequent chapters, US-sponsored BNCs in Colombia played an important role in establishing US credentials in the realm of high culture and providing some Latin American elites and intellectuals with an alternative to European cultural forms. The early cultural programs of the Colombo-Americano in Bogotá, for example, emphasized the literary achievements of the US and convinced some intellectuals, like cultural columnist and poet Fernando Charry Lara, that in English-language literature US works were “as important as the contributions of writers from Great Britain.”⁵⁸ At the same time, BNCs also helped familiarize Colombians with elements of US popular and middle-class culture. Focused on US democracy, education, entertainment, technology, sports, recreation and consumer trends, cultural programs of the Colombo-Americano presented and celebrated the daily life and the high standard of living in the US. Reinforcing but also refining the image of the nation projected by transnational media and commerce, the Colombo-Americano appeared at a time when Colombians across class paid greater attention to US popular culture and lifestyle. That this attention

⁵⁷ Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society*, p. 343.

⁵⁸ “La obra de los escritores americanos, que en la hora actual de las letras de idioma ingles es tan importante como lo puede ser el aporte de los escritores de Gran Bretaña...” Fernando Charry Lara, “Colombia: 4 Nombres,” *ET*, 29 August 1948.

diminished the status of French culture in the nation bothered Charry Lara and other Francophiles.⁵⁹

When the Alianza Colombo-Francesa opened for French language courses and lecture series in 1944, Bogotanos were already engaging with expanded and diversified domestic and foreign cultural offerings. The monopoly of high cultural forms in shaping and defining Colombian national culture was giving way, and, as a result, the days when a French institute might singularly dominate the cultural landscape in the capital had passed. Responding to this change, *El Tiempo* lamented that intellectuals and educated Colombians were not embracing the new French cultural center: “It is completely regrettable that the intellectuals of the capital have not realized the importance of the development of the Alianza Colombo-Francesa, which was founded some months ago.”⁶⁰ Over the course of that decade, the Alianza Colombo-Francesa in Bogotá would find its audience and successfully established other chapters in the major cities of the country. French cultural appeal remained strong. Yet French high culture, which many considered (and few observers would have contested) “the most recognizable influence in Colombian intellectual history,” now faced greater competition from other cultural corners, both domestic and foreign.⁶¹

Before World War II ended, Bogotá’s cultural landscape had certainly lost some of its traditional European flair. Since the 1930s, alternative Colombian and foreign cultural forms had been gaining stature in the capital, and the war accelerated the pace of

⁵⁹ Charry Lara, “Colombia: 4 Nombres.”

⁶⁰ “Es realmente lamentable que los intelectuales capitalinos no se hayan dada cuenta de la importancia que tiene el desarrollo de la Alianza Colombo-Francesa, organizada algunos meses.” “Noticero Cultural,” *ET*, 2 July 1945; “Noticero Cultural,” *ET*, 29 March 1944.

⁶¹ “En este país se habla frecuentemente de que la cultura anglosajona ha desplazado, en cierto sentido, a la francesa, que a través de la historia intelectual colombiana es la mas reconocible influencia.” Charry Lara, “Colombia: 4 Nombres.”

cultural change. With German cultural diplomacy suspended, French programs struggling to attract crowds, and British initiatives increasingly limited by war finances, US cultural diplomacy faced a less competitive international environment in the Andean capital. In a matter of a few short years, the Centro Colombo-Americano de Bogotá had established a formal US cultural presence and successfully integrated its programs into the cultural life of the capital. Yet, a new challenge to US cultural stature was already forming. Before the Cold War was even acknowledged, the Soviet Union ventured into cultural diplomacy in Latin America. This alarmed many in Washington and Bogotá and, as later chapters explore, would have definite implications for their nations' collaborative cultural engagements.

Before the war, the intense anti-communism of the Colombian Catholic Church and the Conservative party severely limited the viability of Soviet cultural activity in Bogotá. With the war, the cultural climate moderated. Allowed by the Liberals, Soviet culture enjoyed a brief period of tolerance in Colombia's capital. Concerts of contemporary Russian music, additions of Soviet literature to the National Library's collection, and more enthusiastic press attention to Soviet scientific achievements followed.⁶² In 1945, the Soviet's formalized their cultural presence with the establishment of the Instituto Cultural Colombo-Soviético [Colombian-Soviet Cultural Institute]. Housed in the Soviet embassy, the institute was funded directly from Moscow but a local board of advisors included prominent Colombian leftists and a future Liberal president of the Republic. During its first year, the institute offered a Russian language class, courses in Russian music, screenings of Soviet films, and variety of conferences highlighting Soviet gender equality, industry, and literature. A small library included

⁶² "Noticero Cultural," *ET*, 26 June 1944.

Russian works translated into Spanish, Spanish language writings on Russia, and a section devoted to Colombian authors. In an attempt to reach organized labor, the institute also organized some cultural activities outside the capital in smaller cities and towns near oil fields and refineries.⁶³

From the pages of the *Revista Colombo-Soviética*, an impressive monthly magazine whose print quality far exceeded similar US or European offerings of the day, the institute made clear its commitment to cultural reciprocity. Writings by both Colombians and Soviets filled the pages of the magazine. Many articles emphasized Soviet cultural interest in Latin America. Features showcased Spanish language teaching in Moscow, books on Simón Bolívar recently translated into Russian, and profiles of Colombian diplomats stationed in the USSR. However, pieces extolling Soviet modernity and promoting it as a model to emulate were in the majority.⁶⁴

Like US cultural diplomats, the Soviets and their local supporters were interested in combating Latin American stereotypes. Editorials, usually unsigned but asserting Colombian authorship, called on the nation to rethink its negative attitudes about the USSR. Noting the advances of the Soviets in political, scientific, industrial, agricultural, military, and educational spheres, commentary argued that “it would be absurd not to take advantage” [*sería absurdo desaprovechar*] of the endless benefits of engagement with the USSR. French and other European writers were explicitly blamed for a widely-held but false image of Russia as “an immense prison, where millions of unfortunate martyrs suffered cruel torture at the hands of an executioner motivated by nothing more

⁶³ “Instituto Cultural Colombo-Soviético,” *Revista Colombo-Soviética* 1, no. 1 (April 1946), pp. 47-52.

⁶⁴ *Revista Colombo-Soviética* 1, no. 2 (Mayo 1946); 1, no. 3 (Junio 1946); 1, no. 4-5 (July & August 1946); 1, no. 6 (September 1946); 1, no. 7 (October y November 1946); 1, no. 8 (December 1946); 1, no. 10 (March-April 1947).

than inflicting pain.” Mimicking the rhetoric of Pan Americanism with calls for mutual understanding, the publication argued that time had come to “set aside those interpretations and to understand each other face to face and in our own words.”⁶⁵

Formal Soviet cultural diplomacy was short-lived in the Colombian Andes and in the regional centers around its oil fields. As a new cycle of partisan violence plagued Colombia at mid-century, international communism was the scapegoat that shouldered the blame. With Conservatives back in power and a resultant resurgence in Church political power, diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union were severed in 1948. The embassy and its institute were closed, and a formal Soviet diplomatic legation did not return for twenty-years.

Conclusion

This chapter presented a macro-view of the emergence and early development of US-sponsored cultural centers in Latin America and Colombia. Through entertainment mass media and other forms of commerce some aspects of US culture were recognizable in Andean Bogotá from the 1920s forward, but there was no formal US cultural presence in the capital until the late 1930s. This absence was in stark contrast to the active cultural diplomacy of European powers. With the development of the Colombo-Americano cultural center, as well as the local American school, the US established an institutional presence in Bogotá for the first time. These institutions were the infrastructure of the new US cultural influence in the capital. Around mid-century, they encouraged and

⁶⁵ “Como una inmensa cárcel, donde millones de infelices mártires sufrían torturas despiadas, de manos de verdugos sin otro estímulo que el dolor ajeno”; “Ha llegado el momento de invitarnos con mutual efusión a prescindir de los intérpretes y a entendernos cara a cara y con nuestras propias palabras.” “Notas Editoriales,” *Revista Colombo-Soviética* 1, no. 1 (April 1946), p. 2

supported the shift in Colombian cultural orientation away from Europe and toward the US.

Washington's support for cultural centers and schools grew out of concern for strong European and especially Axis influence in Latin America as a whole. In Colombia, as elsewhere, the war had the effect of limiting European cultural diplomacy and the US was quick to take advantage of the times. Joining in cultural competition with European allies and enemies, it established new institutional platforms from which its culture could be projected. The original and all subsequent Colombo-American centers were, however, locally controlled and structured by a commitment to cultural reciprocity. By design, they were as much local/Colombian as foreign/US institutions. While they gave the US an institutional presence in the nation, their programming responded to local needs; around mid-century, educational opportunity was in high demand among urban Colombians and Colombo-American centers proffered resources to meet that demand. Such resources were available to elite Colombians, like librarian-diplomat Daniel Samper Ortega, who were interested in directing modernization through educational and cultural reforms. Yet, they were also accessible to members of the growing middle and professional classes who were interested in constructing more personal pathways to modernity. Importantly, and as will be argued throughout this dissertation, Colombia's mid-century shift in cultural orientation had much to do with US engagement of these non-elite classes.

Chapter Five

Convergence: Colombo-Americano Culture

This chapter analyzes foreign/local encounters in the Centro Colombo-Americano de Bogotá, and it demonstrates the growth in and diversity of US cultural influence in the Colombian capital during the 1940s. Appearing during a period of accelerated cultural change in the nation, the Colombo-Americano proffered alternatives to the traditional models that framed Colombian education and culture. While elites who equated the US with modernity were important supporters of the cultural center, the pronounced participation of the capital's emerging middle and professional classes more broadly signaled a new Colombian cultural orientation toward the US. Students, teachers, artists, academics, intellectuals, journalists, librarians, career professionals, and business employees responded enthusiastically to Colombo-Americano resources and adapted them to their own needs. In the process, the center facilitated the spread of American English, built infrastructure linking locals with higher education in the US, and displaced traditional European influence in classrooms, on book shelves, and in visual and performing arts venues. Fostering reconsideration of the US as a legitimate producer of high culture was an important early success of the center, but programming also validated the cultural practices and lifestyles of the US middle and popular classes. Locally controlled and grounded in cultural reciprocity, the center was equally committed to the exploration and diffusion of Colombian culture. At a time when Colombianidad was openly contested and conflicts between tradition and modernity were playing out, Colombo-Americano resources were well engaged by advocates of cultural change.

While later chapters treat cultural encounters in the various Colombo-Americanos, American schools, and US-sponsored mass media programs in the aggregate, the current chapter provides a more detailed analysis of the organization and programs of the first binational center in Bogotá. The first half considers educational programs and focuses on English language instruction and higher education placement services. It demonstrates how each program responded to local demand while facilitating broader Colombian familiarity with US culture and middle class modernity. The second half of the chapter considers cultural programming more broadly by exploring lectures, library services, visual arts, and music programs at the center. It demonstrates how Colombian-US cultural encounters and transnational cultural connections developed between individuals and communities in the US and Colombia. Together they evidence the emergence of transnational educational and cultural communities as concrete manifestations of the new Pan Americanism.

Pan American Classrooms: Colombo-Americano Educational Programming

While the local board oversaw the development of the Colombo-Americano in Bogotá, a North American director was hired to manage day-to-day operations. In Bogotá, as in most of the early centers, the directors were US citizens who had been recruited with assistance from Washington and approved by the local board. Through the 1940s, many of the directors were academics drawn from English and foreign language departments of US universities and colleges. Many served two years before returning to teaching posts at home, but others moved on to similar positions at cultural centers in other countries.¹ As new centers were opening across the region during that decade, there

¹ *15 Años del Centro Colombo-Americano: 1942-1957* (Bogotá: 1957), LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

was plenty of demand for experienced directors. Through the 1960s, the salaries of many of these directors were paid through US government grants to the institutions.

In the 1940s, the teaching staff of the Colombo-Americano was comprised of US, Colombian, and third-country nationals. Most teachers taught part-time, but the few who were professional language teachers had been recruited in Washington. As with the directors, the salaries of these “grantee” teachers were paid through a US government grant to the center’s board. Importantly, however, these teachers were officially employed by the local BNC. In surrendering employment authority over grantees to the local board, the State Department wanted to avoid any impression that their recruits were instruments of Washington policy. At the same time, the department held clear expectations that the grantee teacher would help to interpret the US for foreign students and, reciprocally, on return to the US make “a further contribution toward American understanding of foreign countries.”² As compared to teaching salaries in the US, grantee salaries were quite low. So in order to entice a wide pool of qualified candidates, the department extended to them some of the in-country benefits provided to members of the Foreign Service. Benefits did not include draft deferments for male teachers.³

Of the seven teachers on staff at the opening of the Colombo-Americano in 1942, two were full-time grantees and five were part-time “auxiliary” professors. At the end of the decade as the demand for English courses grew, the staff of the center had increased to eighteen professors of which four were grantees from the US and fourteen were locally

² Murphy, “Departmental Policy in its Program of Assistance to Cultural Centers,” p. 11.

³ John McClintock to Robert Parrish, 7 Dec. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1362, F: Bogotá Correspondence.

hired auxiliaries (both full-time and part-time).⁴ Initially, many of those local hires were drawn from among the families of US embassy personnel. Frequently, the wives of Foreign Service officers assumed the role of teachers, and it was not unusual for the same women to volunteer in the local American school. Other locally residing US citizens with no affiliation to the embassy were also hired as teachers to help meet ever increasing demand. Some were British, Canadian or other English-speaking foreign nationals. Some were Colombians who had lived and learned English abroad. Many were the wives of Colombian and resident US or European businessmen.⁵ Few of the auxiliary professors were trained teachers, and their periods of employment were often conditioned by their husbands' transfers to other regions. For both of these reasons, turnover rates were quite high among locally hired US and third-country nationals. However, English-speaking Colombian educators who had lived in the US together with long-term US residents of the capital quickly became the most desirable hires for the center. As compared to teachers recruited in the US, these individuals were usually not professional educators. Yet because they were more likely to remain employees over the course of several years, professional development expenditures to train them in modern methods of second language instruction were easy to justify. That they were already living in the local community, understood Bogotano culture, and needed little cultural orientation added to their appeal as employees.

⁴“El Centro Colombo-Americano de Bogotá: Estudiantes Hasta 50 Años Aprenden el Inglés,” *El Liberal* (Bogotá), 18 Sept. 1948; Carlos Martínez Cabana, “Do You Speak English,” *Cromos* (22 January 1949), p. 51.

⁵ Acta #8, 10 Sept. 1942, Actas1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

American English in Demand

From the beginning, language instruction was the essence of the Colombo-Americano's work. A basic objective of Washington's inter-American cultural diplomacy was increasing the number of second language speakers of English, Spanish, and Portuguese throughout the hemisphere. In the US, Rockefeller and the OIAA advocated for and financially supported the study of Spanish, and to a lesser extent Portuguese, at the secondary and university levels. They provided language education grants to schools, colleges, and professional organizations as part of a broad effort to promote Pan Americanism within the US. In Latin America, Rockefeller and his colleagues saw BNCs as the most effective forum for meeting their language goals. In Bogotá, the board of directors of the center concurred and believed there would never be "solid friendship between the two countries without mutual understanding of the Spanish and English languages."⁶ English classes dominated the academic program, but courses in Spanish for foreign residents were also offered. The center marketed the Spanish courses to the US colony in Bogotá with front-page newspaper advertisements in English that asked "Have you really tried to learn Spanish?"⁷ Occasionally, in the spirit of Pan Americanism, Portuguese courses were also offered. Still, through the 1940s and beyond, more than 90% of the language courses at the Colombo-Americano were English.

During and after World War II, English was replacing French as the global language of business and diplomacy, and demand for English language instruction in Latin America exploded. Clearly, through BNCs, the US encouraged and facilitated this demand. Yet, if we examine the proliferation of English language courses in Colombia, it

⁶ Centro Colombo-Americano de Bogotá, *Centro Colombo-Americano de Bogotá: Prospecto – 1945* (Bogotá: 1945), LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

⁷ "Have You Really Tried to Learn Spanish" [advertisement], *ET*, 6 February 1944.

is obvious that demand for English instruction was also a function of contemporary Colombian education reforms. Under Liberal reforms, both public and private secondary school classrooms were subject to greater oversight by the inspectors of the Ministry of National Education. National curriculum standards had been established under Conservative ministers in the 1920s, but when it came to enforcement, much deference had been shown to private schools (especially Catholic). Beginning in the 1930s, however, all private school programs received new scrutiny, and the approval of secondary programs by inspectors of the ministry was required for the awarding a bachillerato certificate. Battles ensued over educational authority between Liberals and the Church. As relates to this discussion, curriculum standards implemented and enforced by Liberals placed new emphasis on English as a language of study in all secondary schools throughout the country. Significantly, over the course of a decade, French, the traditional second language taught to Colombian elites, was officially displaced by English as the primary foreign language taught in the nation's secondary schools.

Though many elite schools previously required some study of English, it was introduced as a subject requirement for all secondary schools in the 1930s. By the early 1940s when six years of French were obligatory for the bachillerato, the English requirement had been increased to four years of study. Greater change came in 1945. At that time, the English requirement was increased to a total of six years as the study of French was reduced to four years. In presenting these changes the Ministry of National Education aimed at establishing "English as the principal language so that students will learn to speak it, write it and translate it, and leaving French as secondary, with the

exclusive aim of [a student] being able to translate it correctly.”⁸ Thus, as secondary education was expanding in Colombia and becoming more accessible to non-elite classes, greater numbers of Colombians began to learn English rather than French. Of course the reach of the secondary schools remained limited and enforcement of curriculum standards in private Catholic schools was still challenged, yet the rise of English was clear. The shift toward English and away from French directly benefited the new Colombo-Americano in the capital. As center director Clifford Prator reported enthusiastically to colleagues throughout the Americas, “for the first time in the history of Colombian education, English will be given the preference over French.”⁹ Back in Washington, the new changes were positively noted as well.¹⁰

The immediate impact of the new English requirements was seen in demand for qualified English teachers and English teaching materials in Colombian public and private schools. There were simply not enough qualified English teachers in the nation, so many institutions and educators turned to the Colombo-Americano for assistance. Some institutions sought to contract the center’s teachers for their schools, others asked for assistance in locating teachers, and some arranged to send entire classes to the center for instruction.¹¹ The Instituto Colombo-Británico was also an English language resource in the city, but it is noteworthy that those who turned to Colombo-Americano commonly stated a preference to learn American rather than British English. Letters expressed a common sentiment that learning English with US teachers “would be

⁸ “...tomando el Inglés como idioma principal, de manera que los alumnos aprendan a hablarlo, escribirlo, y traducirlo, y dejando el Francés como secundario, con el exclusivo propósito de llegar a traducirlo correctamente.” Germán Arciniegas, *Memoria del señor Ministro de Educación Nacional, 1946* (Bogotá: 1946), p. xxxii.

⁹ Office of the Commissioner of Education (San Juan, Puerto Rico), *The InterAmerican Newsletter* 2, no. 2 (June 1944), p. 2.

¹⁰ John H. Furbay, *Education in Colombia* (Washington: US Office of Education, 1946), p. 109.

¹¹ Harold Colvocoresses to David Lindquist, 20 April 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1378, F: Reports 1945.

more practical.”¹² Similar sentiment was also expressed in requests received by the center for English teaching materials or for assistance in securing such materials. Colombian school administrators and teachers frequently noted that British materials were readily available to them, but they were more interested in materials that engaged the “type of timely English spoken in the United States” rather than the “classical” English spoken by the British.¹³ Thus, as the first Colombo-Americano was emerging, its institutional position was strengthened by new demand for English instruction and resources. As it developed English programs around the new secondary school language requirements, it was in a position to simultaneously promote American over British English among Colombians.

To assist the Ministry of National Education with the growing need for English instructors in the nation’s schools, the center developed programs of professional development for educators. Private group courses were taught to foreign language and other faculties from universities and colegios throughout the city. Indicative of the continuing dominance of the Church in secondary education, many of the participating students in such private courses were priests and nuns. Additionally, beginning in 1943, a free seminar was offered to Colombian teachers of English. The goal of the seminar, as agreed upon between the ministry and the center’s board, was to increase the number of qualified Colombian teachers of English and improve their quality of instruction. Held annually in the 1940s during the traditional December to February school vacation, between 60-80 Colombian teachers of English came to the center for the month long seminar. Members of the staff, both US and Colombian teachers, served as the instructors

¹² Harold Colvocoresses to Clifford Prator, 25 Jan. 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1361, F: Colombo Americano.

¹³ David Lindquist to Harold Colvocoresses, 8 April 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1378, F: Reports 1945.

for the seminar. The ministry formally encouraged schools to send their teachers, and its officials led some of the courses, lectures, and discussions. A representative of the Instituto Colombo-Británico occasionally participated by giving a lecture on British authors or the differences between American and British English, but overall British participation was limited. Initially, most of the enrolled teachers were residents of Bogotá, but as demand for the course grew in other regions, the center and the ministry initiated travel grants to bring more teachers to Bogotá. Eventually as new Colombo-Americanos appeared, such courses would be repeated in regions throughout the country.¹⁴ Seminars for English teachers were important to improving language teaching quality in the nation's schools and many students learned from teachers who completed the Colombo-Americano seminar. Still, a number of them chose to supplement the instruction they received in their schools by enrolling directly in classes at the center.

From its inaugural date well into the 1960s, there was higher demand for English classes than the center could meet. At the start in September 1942, there were 250 students.¹⁵ By the second semester, six months later, the center enrolled 600 students and was filled to capacity.¹⁶ As enrollments rose, the size of the original building limited the growth of the student population. The center's director noted in 1944, classes were "absolutely full" and it was "impossible to increase the number of courses or the number of hours of courses due to physical space."¹⁷ By the end of the 1940s, the center had

¹⁴ Acta #12, 8 Nov. 1943, Actas1, CCA/Bogotá MSS; "Hoy Clausuró el Instituto para los Profesores de Inglés," *La Razón* (Bogotá), 3 Dec. 1943; "Instituto para perfeccionamiento de inglés funciona en el Centro Americano," *La Razón* (Bogotá), 5 Dec. 1944; "Cincuenta Maestros Hicieron Curso Especial en el Colombo-Americano," *ET*, 17 Dec. 1944; "Curso de Verano para Profesores de Inglés," *ET*, 3 Jan. 1949; "Para Estudios de Inglés en EEUU Becada Mary Mora," *El Heraldo* (Barranquilla), 29 May 1952; James McGillivray to Colegio Directors, 23 January 1947, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

¹⁵ Acta #8, 2 Oct. 1942, Actas1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

¹⁶ Carl Sauer to Andre Donovan (American Embassy, Bogotá), 22 March 1943, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

¹⁷ Acta #14, 1 Nov. 1944, Actas1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

moved twice to progressively larger rental spaces and annual enrollment averaged over 1,500 students. In less than a decade, more than 12,000 Colombians had studied American English in the Bogotá center.¹⁸ Demand for English instruction continued apace into the next decade and soon convinced the center's board to initiate construction of a large building to serve as its permanent home.

During the 1940s, Colombo-Americano English classes were offered at the elementary, intermediate, advanced, and conversational levels. In addition, there was a class in perfecting English for those who aimed for fluency.¹⁹ Special English classes for children ages six to ten were offered using “modern methods with games, songs, [and] rhythmic band.”²⁰ Indicative of growing use of English in business, beginner and advanced courses in commercial English and shorthand were offered for those with existing English language skills and these classes faced especially high demand. Additionally, special English courses were tailored to the needs of professional groups such as doctors, nurses, dentists, lawyers, and engineers.²¹

Middle-class students would eventually form the overwhelming majority of the student population at all Colombo-Americanos, but initial tuition rates at the first center were actually cost-prohibitive for much of that class. In 1942, members of the board were hesitant to compete openly for students with the Instituto Colombo-Británico. The US had recently entered the war, and board members were sensitive to maintaining Allied unity at the local level. They heeded appeals from the US ambassador to avoid direct

¹⁸ “El Centro Colombo-Americano de Bogotá,” *El Liberal* (Bogotá), 18 Sept. 1948; Martínez Cabana, “Do You Speak English?”

¹⁹ “Acta #14, 1 Nov. 1944, Actas1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

²⁰ Centro Colombo-Americano de Bogotá, *Centro Colombo-Americano de Bogotá: Prospecto – 1944* (Bogotá: 1945), LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS; “Inglés Para Niños” [advertisement], *ET*, 27 Jan. 1944.

²¹ *Centro Colombo-Americano de Bogotá: Prospecto – 1945*; “Senores Dentistas” [advertisement], *ET*, 17 Feb. 1943.

competition with the British. Thus, tuition and fees were initially set on par with those at the British institute. At the same time, the board made clear it intended to serve a broader segment of the city's population than its British counterpart. Reiterating its goal of reaching all economic classes, the board called for gradual introduction of a tuition schedule geared toward the middle and popular classes.²² Over the course of its first couple years, as the Instituto Colombo-Británico experience increasing demand for its higher priced courses, the Colombo-Americano diversified its course offerings and established tuition rates with the emerging middle classes in mind. Owing to its better price points as well as the post-war budgetary limits of the British Council, the Colombo-Americano's growth outpaced that of the Instituto Colombo-Británico by the early 1950s.²³

In the first years, average Colombo-Americano students were twenty to thirty years old. Almost all were secondary school graduates, and many were university students or graduates who were starting professional careers.²⁴ Notably, many of these students would have graduated from secondary programs before English officially displaced French as the primary foreign language in the national curriculum. Thus, as the use of English in business and commerce was increasing, many who had not learned (or only marginally learned) the language in their schooling turned to the center to improve their language skills. In 1944, approximately 50% of the students were business

²² "Acta #6, 13 Sept. 1942, Actas1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

²³ Although the British Council maintained a presence in Colombia and were active in cultural programming, each of the five centers it opened in the 1940s closed in the decade after the war. A post-war recession was blamed. Several of the language institutes reopened and closed again over the following decades. Since 1981, an Instituto Colombo-Británico has functioned in Bogotá. Instituto Colombo-Británico, *The British Council in Colombia* (Bogotá: The British Council, 2000), pp. 15-17.

²⁴ "El Centro Colombo Americano una Institución (sic) Panamericana," *La Nueva Generación* 1, no. 5 (Marzo 1943); "600 Alumnos Aprenden Idiomas en el Colombo-Americano," *El Espectador* (Bogotá), 5 May 1943.

employees, owners of small businesses or independently employed professionals.

Another 30% were recent secondary school graduates seeking to sharpen their language skills and improve their chances of securing business employment.²⁵

Simultaneous with the demand for classrooms and instructors, the need for English language textbooks and other instructional materials multiplied during the war years. While US publishers would soon respond to these market demands, initially the Colombo-Americano (like Colombian secondary schools), had little choice but to rely on locally available materials that had been produced or published in Britain. *England Calling* was then the official English language text recommended by the Colombian Ministry of National Education and was a compilation of readings for the English learner. It focused heavily on British culture and geography. The coordination committee in Barranquilla, then organizing English classes of its own, called it “propaganda” and along with many others encouraged the OIAA to make US-content teaching materials available to Colombian schools.²⁶ Locally available materials, framed with British cultural references, also proved unacceptable for Bogotá’s new center. The director stressed to the OIAA, State Department, and private US publishers that the center was “desperate for teaching materials” with American and not British content.²⁷

As an immediate fix, the OIAA and State Department offered grants for the publication of instructional pamphlets that teachers at the center were already creating for their classes. Similar grants were provided to publish short textbooks written by US university professors who were on State Department sponsored exchanges with

²⁵ Andres Samper G., “Latinoamérica y Norteamérica: El Centro Colombo Americano,” *ET*, 23 August 1944.

²⁶ Myron Reed to David Richardson, 3 July 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Barranquilla, 1942.

²⁷ Carl Sauer to Francis Pratt (Circulation director of Time, Inc.), 21 May 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1361, F:Colombian American Center.

Colombian universities. These materials were always sold to the students at cost and such pricing was a key to attracting the middle class. Materials produced in-house helped keep book fees lower than at the Instituto Colombo-Británico, which sold more elaborate, more aesthetically appealing but more costly London-published textbooks to its students.²⁸ While US publishing houses soon responded to the new market for teaching English-as-a-foreign-language, the Colombo-Americano in Bogotá continued to produce high-quality and cheaply priced instructional materials. Indeed, across the decades it became a textbook resource for BNCs throughout the Americas.²⁹

From an instructional materials standpoint, the principal method for introducing US cultural content into the teaching of English was the adaptation of US prose for use in anthologies and exercise booklets for students. Multiple staff-produced texts featured short stories by US authors condensed into simplified English form.³⁰ Another method of injecting US content into English instruction was creating classroom materials that focused on day-to-day living in the US and presented the student with visions of US lifestyle. In this category, the most commonly used text was *Life with the Taylors* by James McGillivray.³¹ McGillivray, who was director of the center in Bogotá from 1947-1949, expanded a series of mimeographed lessons that he had created for use in his

²⁸ Carl Sauer to Harold Colvocoresses, 17 July 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1361, F:Colombian American Center. See also: Harold Colvocoresses to Frederick Stimson, 16 Nov. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F:Medellin; Harold Colvocoresses to Edwin Sours, 6 Nov. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F:Barranquilla, 1943; Acta #9, 22 Oct. 1942, Actas1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

²⁹ Minutes of the Meeting of Board of Directors, Centro Colombo-Americano de Bogotá (hereafter Minutes), 6 June 1966, Libro de Actas del Centro Colombo-Americanos, Libro #2 (hereafter Actas2), CCA/Bogotá MSS. Though most often recorded in Spanish, the minutes of board meetings were recorded in English during this period. The title of the document reflects the language used.

³⁰ "Noticero Cultural," *ET*, 27 Feb. 1944; Lionel Landry, ed., *English Conversation for Advance Students: Exercises Based on Contemporary North American Authors* (Bogotá: Camacho Roldán & Cia, 1946); Clifford Prator, ed., *Br'er Rabbit and Br'er Fox* (Bogotá: Centro Colombo-Americano, 1944); Clifford Prator, ed., *Pecos Bill* (Bogotá: Centro-Colombo Americano, 1944).

³¹ James H. McGillivray, *Life with the Taylors: The Story of an American Family for Students of English Conversation*, 2nd ed. (Bogotá: Selca, 1948).

classes and published it locally in 1948. *Life with the Taylors* was subsequently published in the US, and throughout the 1950s its multiple editions were widely distributed to BNCs in Latin America and beyond.

In *Life with the Taylors*, storylines and dialogues chronicle a year in the life of a “typical” American family of five living in generic Mayville. Janet and Jim Taylor were the parents of three children. In the course of a typical day, Janet spent her time preparing meals, running the household, and shopping. Jim worked for a downtown advertising agency. He had a secretary who took lots of shorthand, and a wife who was waiting with a meal when he came home for lunch. In the course of the year, eldest son Phil attended college, worked a summer job and fell in love. Mary, the sophisticated daughter, took her high school studies seriously and occupied her free time with homework, babysitting, dating, and reading *Good Housekeeping* magazine. Young Bobby, an elementary school student, got into plenty of mischief and added comic relief to the narrative.

Complementing family dialogues, topical sections provided further explanation of US customs. Family and neighborhood life, civic holidays, and popular sports were detailed for the student.

As a representation of a post-war “American” family, the Taylors fit a US constructed and popular stereotype of its middle class. They were white and financially comfortable. Suburban not urban, they projected no ethnicity but a strong sense of nationality. They lived a modern lifestyle with technology reaching into the family home through kitchen appliances, telephone lines, and an automobile in the driveway. The contemporaneously exploding US consumer culture provided the Taylors with multiple

shopping options and readily available credit. Their lives were safe and happy and the challenges they faced seem trivial.

On balance, the presentation of the Taylors did not challenge the then popular Latin American stereotypes of the US as a modern, efficient, and consumer-driven society. Indeed, the US of the Taylor family was proudly all of these things. However, where *Life with the Taylors* did begin to challenge Latin American notions of the US was in showcasing a middle-class family, their values and culture. At a time when many Colombians' sense of US culture was built from Hollywood films and the newsreels that accompanied them on the screen, the representation of US culture in the text stood in sharp distinction from moving images of wealthy tycoons, glamorous and seductive stars, rugged cowboys, spectacular cities, and criminal gangs. Through the text, the student saw that life in the US revolved around the family unit, that educational resources were plentiful and broadly dispersed, and that democratic governance provided individuals with freedom and choices. The text placed particular emphasis upon education; at the center of middle-class culture, education was highly valued by the Taylor family, their local community and the nation in general. High school graduation was expected of each child and a university education was encouraged for both sexes. Not surprisingly, the text avoided reference to race segregation and other inequalities that then plagued the US education system; as the question of education and race made its way through the US court system and the post-war civil rights movement coalesced at the schoolhouse door, *Life with the Taylors* simply explained that the “the Federal Government of the United States does not interfere in any way with public education within the states.”³² The text

³² James H. McGillivray, *Life with the Taylors: Conversational Narrative and Exercises in American English* (New York: American Book Company, 1955), p. 47.

additionally avoided a discussion of religion in the US. Between historically Catholic Latin America and the majority Protestant US, religion served as a cultural divide; thus, while explicitly defining the US as a Christian country, no mention was made of Protestantism.

Significantly, in *Life with the Taylors* there is no high culture on display. Classical arts were nowhere to be seen while many were the manifestations of popular culture and customs. The Taylors' lived in a musical world filled with contemporary orchestras for adults, teenage dance records, school marching bands and parades. The Taylor children read American literature in school, but in their free time popular magazines were more common. Football games and cheering crowds, surprise birthday parties with cakes and candles, Halloween costumes and Christmas trees revealed the cultural flavor of the family's middle-class life. Used consistently at each of the Centros Colombo-Americanos into the 1960s (as well as BNCs throughout Latin America), McGillivray's text was adapted to all levels. But with its strong emphasis on US educational and middle-class cultures, it was mostly used with intermediate and advanced students that planned university studies in the US.

Cultural Detour: A New Route to Higher Education

Few Latin American students chose to study at US universities before World War II, but as new educational communities were built under the new Pan Americanism the numbers grew rapidly. In 1939, just 6,670 foreign students attended US universities and colleges. Ten years later in 1949, the total was 26,500. Within that four-fold increase, the number of Latin American students grew five-fold.³³ These figures signaled a new and

³³ The Latin American totals increased from 1,023 to 5,820 in the period. Espinosa, *The Inter-American Beginnings of US Cultural Diplomacy, 1938-1948*, p. 269.

accelerating trend in global higher education; the US was becoming an education destination for the world. Within the following five decades, the number of international students annually studying in US colleges and universities reached the half million mark. While Asian students accounted for more than 50% of the new total, the number of Latin American students also grew substantially. By the start of the twenty-first century, more than 68,000 Latin Americans were annually enrolled in post-secondary programs across the US. Significantly, Colombian students, who from the start demonstrated pronounced enthusiasm for US higher education, accounted for 12% of the Latin American total. Only Mexico and Brazil sent higher numbers of university students to the US.³⁴

The initial increases in Latin American enrollments in US higher education resulted in part from OIAA domestic programs that encouraged educators to take up the charge of Pan Americanism; increased dialogue, collaboration, and exchanges between academics in the US and Latin America created transnational links among educational communities that fostered student movement between North and South. The newly elevated status of English in education, commerce and diplomacy in the hemisphere also contributed to the growth. But, more significant in the initial enrollment boom were the transnational educational effects of the war in Europe.

World War II temporarily prevented Latin American students from traveling to and enrolling in European universities. In Colombia, where demand for space in universities was increasing alongside secondary school graduation rates, the closure of routes to Europe exacerbated that domestic demand. At the same time, paths to US universities became more accessible than ever. The US High School Movement of the

³⁴ Mexico sent 12,518 students in 2001 while Brazil sent 8,972. Colombia sent 8,068. Hey-Kyung Koh Chin, ed., *Open Doors: Report on International Education Exchange, 2003* (New York: Institute of International Education), p. 26-28.

first third of the century had spurred a boom in post-secondary enrollments and led to the founding of new institutions. But, the war in Europe negatively impacted enrollments. With men drafted into the military and women going to work in war-related industries, many of the smaller liberal arts, junior, and technical colleges were closing or on the verge of bankruptcy. Even before the draft age was lowered to eighteen, many such institutions experienced enrollment drops between 30 and 50%. Enrollments were also down at larger, well-established institutions.³⁵ Attracting Latin American students was one way to offset negative enrollment figures, and because doing so supported the general scheme of US cultural diplomacy, the process was facilitated by the federal government.

BNCs in Latin America played a significant though little recognized role in preparing students from the region for US higher education. In Bogotá in the early 1940s, the Colombo-Americano's first teaching staff was overwhelmed by the interests of Colombians in US colleges and universities. The teachers unexpectedly found themselves in the role of educational advisers as both Colombians interested in US education and US educational institutions interested in attracting students sought their counsel.³⁶ Through the 1940s, the center developed as a local servicing center for a growing number of scholarships offered by US colleges and universities; typical of its locally grounded approach, it established a scholarship committee with joint US and Colombian representation to make determinations and recommendations about candidates. Various US vocational, industrial and professional training programs also turned to the center to attract foreign applicants. As local requests for information on US institutions multiplied,

³⁵ "50 Colleges Closed by the War, Others on the Verge of Bankruptcy," *NYT*, 7 Nov. 1942.

³⁶ "Vasta Labor Cultural Cuple El Centro Colombo-Americano," *ET*, 22 Feb. 1944.

the center's library gathered and maintained an up-to-date collection of university catalogs. The center also offered US institutions a suite of applicant screening services including written and oral English proficiency exams and local reference checking.³⁷ With the assistance of the center, eighty-one US educational scholarships were awarded to Colombians in its first two years, and dozens of additional students were assisted prior to their acceptances into US educational institutions.³⁸

In its quest for modernity, the Colombian government encouraged this new wave of foreign scholarships and educational exchanges. Acknowledging limited educational resources at home, it took an active role in scholarship oversight.³⁹ Hoping to enlist foreign educated Colombians into the Liberal modernity project, the Ministry of National Education established a Council of Foreign Scholarships in 1944 to disseminate information, publicize opportunities, approve candidates, and supervise recipients. So direct benefits to the nation might be assured, the new council required candidates to demonstrate both fluency in the language of the nation where they intended to study and a commitment to return to Colombia upon completion of their academic program.⁴⁰ Demonstrating the collaborative relationship that had developed between the Colombo-Americano and Colombian government cultural managers, the scholarship committee at the center enthusiastically supported the goals of the Council of Foreign Scholarships. They offered English language proficiency exams for some applicants, provided English language classes to others, and by the late 1940s required scholarship recipients to

³⁷ *Centro Colombo-Americano de Bogotá: Prospecto – 1945*, p. 3.

³⁸ Andres Samper G., "El Centro Colombo-Americano Da Varias Becas Para Estudiar en Institutos de Norteamérica," *ET*, 1 Nov. 1944; "Universidades de EEUU Ofrecen Nuevas Becas a Los Colombianos," *El Liberal* (Bogotá), 6 Sept. 1946.

³⁹ Antonio Rocha, MEN, to Dario Echandia, MRREE, 19 July 1944, "Correspondencia con el Ministerio de Educación Nacional: 1944," MRREE, Sección Primera, 707/92/71, AGN.

⁴⁰ Decreto 2171 of 1944, *Diario Oficial*, vol. III (Bogotá: 1944).

formally declare their intention to return to Colombia and work in their chosen field.⁴¹

Constructing Pan American Culture: Colombo-Americano Cultural Programming

While language learning and university preparation constituted much of the activity at the center, the goal of mutual understanding also structured an ambitious cultural agenda. Extensive cultural programming during the first decade attracted many non-students to the center. By the late 1940s, when annual course enrollment totaled over 1,500 students, more than 15,000 people were annually in attendance at Colombo-Americano cultural events outside of course requirements.⁴² Significantly, these programs were just as likely to be Colombian as US-themed, and programs and presentations were as often in Spanish as in English. In an attempt to avoid the one-directional cultural promotion they associated with European cultural diplomacy, the OIAA and State Department structured cultural reciprocity and binational leadership into the organizational design. Such balanced cultural programming fostered new transnational relationships that helped redefine Colombian-US cultural relations around mid-century. It gave substance to the tenuous notion of broad Pan American culture.

While cultural reciprocity conditioned programming, goals of both US cultural diplomacy and Colombian educational and cultural reforms were never far from the surface. From the US perspective, programs fomented and solidified positive impressions about the US among Colombians. The Colombo-Americano provided cultural venues useful for confronting common stereotypes about the US, and a clear priority in the early days was dismantling the widely-held notion that the US was devoid of culture. To establish credibility in the elite cultural circles of the capital, some programs illuminated

⁴¹ "Applicant Information Sheet for Scholarship Recipients," 1949, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

⁴² Murphy, "Departmental Policy in its Program of Assistance to Cultural Centers," p. 39.

US appreciation of European high culture. Europe, after all, was common cultural ground for both nations and recognizing shared historical roots was helpful toward building Pan American identity. Yet, the louder argument made through the programs of the first decade was that US culture had matured, gained independence and was now distinct from its European roots; simultaneously, this discourse was explicitly distancing modern Latin America from European culture as well. Much of the cultural programming at the center moved beyond the narrow limits of European high culture and showcased representative forms of US and Latin American popular culture. At the core of this broader view of culture was a validation of modern, middle-class lifestyle.

Colombo-Americano programming put both traditional and contemporary Colombian cultural forms on a high-profile stage and celebrated them. Many programs were presented with the collaboration of the Ministry of National Education. Actively constructing a more inclusive frame of Colombianidad to strengthen national unity and facilitate their modernization agenda, Liberal cultural managers --officials of the Ministry of National Education and cultural institutions it supported-- took full advantage of the resources of the center. Certainly, European-influenced high culture remained a constant theme in collaborative efforts, yet ministry-sponsored performances also began to recognize and offer selective validation of popular culture. Dance and musical forms of the Andean interior that could be packaged as authentic and folkloric --and were not, in the opinion of Liberal cultural managers, commercialized, unsophisticated, or foreign in origin--were deemed worthy of sponsorship. Still, the ministry had no monopoly over the Colombo-Americano cultural stage, and the center opened its door to independent performers, artists and organizations. In Bogotá, but especially outside the capital where

the newer Colombo-Americanos had less collaboration with the ministry, programming demonstrated active contemporary contestation over the meaning of Colombianidad. That the Church and the elite (both inside and outside government) had lost the power to filter national culture was evident. In this transformative process, cultural manifestations of modernity, though they might be foreign in origin, commercialized, or considered unsophisticated by the elite, were granted new respect.

Cultural programs at the Colombo-Americano centered around four activities. First, lectures were presented in English and Spanish on various topics to both specialized and general audiences. Second, a lending library was established and maintained not only in support of academic programs but as a resource for the local community as well. Third, a public art gallery at the center hosted exhibitions and sponsored art shows around the city. Finally, an active music program supported local Colombian musicians and introduced US trends through live and recorded performances. A brief analysis of each of these activities follows.

Lectures: Defining Colombian and US Cultures

Lectures (or *charlas*) at the Colombo-Americano were free of charge and open to the general public. Scheduled in late afternoon and early evening to attract professionals and office workers, they covered diverse cultural topics and were presented in either English or Spanish. During the war years, most lectures were explicitly framed by the rhetoric of Pan Americanism and hemispheric unity. Introductions to lectures by the center's director or a board member, commonly celebrated the new Pan American approach to cultural collaboration, resource sharing, and open dialogue.

Four types of lectures were common. First, the center's US teaching staff developed lectures for English language learners. The goal of these short lectures was to improve listening skills, and they were "slowly and carefully pronounced" in simplified English that new language learners could understand.⁴³ Both students of the center and students of English in the general public were encouraged to attend. Most frequently, the topic was the geography and culture of the presenter's home region in the US. Such lectures proved so popular that they were often repeated to accommodate high demand. At times they were even scheduled at locations away from the center, like the National Library, that could hold larger crowds. Not surprisingly, these lecturers usually avoided potentially controversial references to race and religion while painting a portrait of middle-class modernity in their home region. Following the lecture, all participants were encouraged to practice conversational English at socials in the center's tea room.

A second type of lecture was presented by other US citizens who were visiting Colombia in professional capacities. Lecturers in this category included individuals contracted by Washington for BNC speaking tours, professors teaching at local universities, graduate students conducting academic research, and US cultural diplomats. Topics varied. The case of lecturer Arthur Aiton is illustrative. A professor of Hispanic-American history at University of Michigan, Aiton was contracted by the State Department and sent to Colombia to present a series of twenty-four lectures on US and Latin American history. Aiton presented twelve lectures in each language over the course of a month. The lectures were popular with university students and academics, but Aiton drew a general audience as well with lectures on "Spanish Frontiers in the United States

⁴³ List of upcoming cultural programs, 14 April 1944, Actas1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

Today” and “The Role of the United States in the History of Latin America.”⁴⁴ Aiton’s *charlas* fit a general pattern of lectures at the center that highlighted commonalities in colonial histories and cultural development within the Americas. When such lectures addressed historical controversies in US-Latin American relations, they commonly balanced explicit acknowledgement of past abuses with enthusiasm for the mutual understanding of the present.

There was no shortage of US academics in Latin America in the 1940s, and BNC lecture programs demonstrated the depth of US academic interest in the region. Since the turn of the century and the opening of the Panama Canal, research in the region had increased markedly. Encouraged by the PAU, private philanthropic foundations and business interests through the 1920s, US academics and other observers in South America embarked on what Ricardo Salvatore calls an “enterprise of knowledge” --a quest to document and understand the little known region that in turn legitimized the expanding US presence.⁴⁵ With the Pan Americanism of the Good Neighbor years, direct US government funding and administrative support increased the volume, accelerated the pace, and diversified the foci of academic research. In Colombia, the national government took steps to facilitate these transnational academic ties because they were engaged in their own “enterprise of knowledge”; in attempting to build national unity and legitimize the central state, it was crucial to have more knowledge about the diverse regions, resources, and cultures of the nation. In 1936, recognizing a dearth of knowledge and the inability of the nation’s existing educational infrastructure to remedy it, Liberals

⁴⁴ “Esquema de la Serie de Conferencias en Español que dictará el Doctor Arthur S. Aiton en el Centro Colombo-Americano,” Feb. 1947, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS; Arthur S. Aiton to Edmund Murphy, 5 Feb. 1948, NARG 59, 810.42711/2-548.

⁴⁵ Ricardo D. Salvatore, “The Enterprise of Knowledge: Representational Machines of Informal Empire,” in *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of US-Latin American Relations*.

determined to encourage and work more closely with foreign research missions. New regulations encouraged foreign researchers to come to Colombia but placed such missions under greater supervision so the government could take full advantage of their findings.⁴⁶ Research in scientific fields was most desirable because Liberal reforms equated science with modernity. But research in the humanities and social sciences was also welcomed to the extent that it might contribute to education reform and wider framing of national culture. Government cultural managers, for example, gave particular credit to US universities and philanthropic foundations for expanding their knowledge of the nation's Indian past.⁴⁷ Thus, it was not unusual for the Ministry of National Education and its cultural division to cosponsor lectures by US researchers at the center.

The third most common type of lecture was delivered by Colombian nationals and focused on contemporary aspects of either US or Colombian society. More often in Spanish than in English, these lectures were always open to public and heavily promoted in the press. As many of these lecturers were influential members of government or professional communities, verbatim printings of their talks frequently appeared in newspapers. Through the first decade, approximately half of the lecturers had visited the US under OIAA or State Department grants that brought Latin American leaders and academics to the US to familiarize them with US culture and trends in their professional fields. From 1940 to 1949, more than five hundred distinguished Latin Americans visited the US on these grants. Prominent among grantees were Colombian ministers of government, newspaper editors, historians, directors of museums, engineers and

⁴⁶ Decree 1060 of May 12, 1936. See copy in "Correspondence con el Ministerio de Educación Nacional: 1947-1948," MRREE, Sección Primera, 709/92/83, AGN.

⁴⁷ "Programas Culturales," Sept. 1943, Ministerio de Cultura, Dirección de Extensión Cultural, 04/01/6, AGN. This memorandum was prepared for Colombian delegation to the First Conference of Ministers of Education of the American Republics.

lawyers.⁴⁸ These grants continued well into the Cold War under the auspices of various diplomatic bureaucracies, and by 1971 more than 1,500 Colombian professors, research scholars, business and government leaders had taken official tours of the US.⁴⁹ On return to Colombia, many participants related their experiences in lectures, books, newspaper articles, and on radio shows. Lectures at the Colombo-Americano were not required of grantees, but they were encouraged by the State Department. Lectures by these grantees as well as Colombians who had visited the US privately revealed developing transnational dialogues, networks and resource sharing between professional and other cultural communities in both countries.

By interpreting US culture and society for Bogotano audiences, Colombian lecturers facilitated a reconsideration of commonly held stereotypes about the US. Given the level of press coverage many of these lecturers garnered, positive reflections on the contemporary US received wide circulation in Colombia. While fascination with US accomplishments in science, particularly feats in engineering, had long been evident among the educated class, most commentators had tended to compartmentalize such achievements from the culture which produced them. Capital and markets, the standard assessment went, drove the achievements of US modernity. Yet in the observations presented in Colombo-Americano lectures by grantees and non-grantees alike, greater appreciation of and interest in the cultural underpinnings of US modernity is clear.

Speaking at a center sponsored event for the Colombian Society of Architects, celebrated architect Jorge Arango Sanin marveled at the success of Tennessee Valley Authority in

⁴⁸ Espinosa, *The Inter-American Beginnings of US Cultural Diplomacy, 1938-1948*. See especially Chapter 14 – “Latin American Grantees of the State Department.”

⁴⁹ In the same period, 476 US citizens visited Colombia under similar programs. “A Statistical Profile of US Exchange Program, 1972,” Record Group 306, General Records of the US Information Agency, Historical Collection Subject Files, 1953-2000, National Archives and Records Administration – College Park, Maryland (hereafter NARG 306), B46, F: Educational Exchanges, Statistical Profile, 1949-1972.

taking an “immense, abandoned, uncultivated region” [*un inmensa, abandonada e inculta región*] and making it one of “astonishing fertility” [*asombrosa fertilidad*]. Notably, he attributed the achievement to a US culture of democracy which aimed to improve the quality of life for all citizens through planning and engineering.⁵⁰ Attempting to move his audience beyond stereotypes, Dr. Carlos Lozano y Lozano suggested in an “Introduction to American Life” that a duality of pragmatism and idealism merged the sciences and arts in US culture. The Colombian diplomat, who had been educated in Rome and Paris and had represented his government in various European capitals, returned from a tour of the US lauding the extent to which North American communities prioritized education. He argued that the national culture in the US was characterized by a “happy and optimistic spirit” [*espíritu de alegría y optimismo*] and that broad public support of educational initiatives structured the public’s optimism for modernity.⁵¹ Lozano y Lozano echoed new found respect for the culture of education in the US that other Colombian observers had begun to articulate. Journalist Roberto García Peña of *El Tiempo* argued that...

*Americans believe in education and believe above all in free education that is available to all those that seek it, without limits. Not only available for those that want it but obligatory for those who don't want it. The school is a typical American symbol, more typical than the warship or the tank.*⁵²

⁵⁰ “TVA – La Nueva Democracia de Planificación y Técnica,” *El Liberal* (Bogotá), 20 Sept. 1945.

⁵¹ Carlos Lozano y Lozano, “Introducción a la Vida Americana,” 16 Dec. 1947 (speech delivered at Centro Colombo-Americano, Bogotá, Colombia.), typescript copy, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

⁵² “Los Americanos creen en la educación y creen sobre todo en la libre educación abierta para todo aquel que la busque, sin limitaciones. No solamente abierta para quienes la deseen sino obligatoria para quienes no la deseen. La escuela es un típico símbolo Americano, mas típico que el barco de guerra o el tanque.” Roberto García Peña, “Visión Norteamericana: Los Estados Unidos – Estampa de su Pueblo,” 28 Aug. 1944 (speech delivered at Centro Colombo-Americano, Bogotá, Colombia), typescript copy, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS. See also Andrés Samper, “Latinoamérica y Norteamérica: El Centro Colombo Americano,” *ET*, 23 Aug. 1944.

While such commentary infrequently acknowledged the racial and regional inequalities that plagued the US education system, it demonstrated new Colombian interest in the US as an educational model and the reconsideration of existing cultural stereotypes.

Finally, the fourth and most common category of lecture featured discussions of the literary works and traditions of both nations. Celebration of literary canons had been a central element of pre-war European cultural diplomacy in Colombia and throughout Latin America. As the Colombo-Americano attempted to displace European cultural dominance in the Andean capital, it engaged in similar promotion of its own literature. In the spirit of cultural reciprocity, Colombian literature was equally celebrated and explored. Typical in the early years was the very first cycle of literary lectures given at the center in February 1943. The series of four lectures on poetry was delivered in Spanish and featured the works of two Colombians, one Latin American, and one US poet. All but one lecture was presented by a Colombian.⁵³ In addition to individual lectures on literary figures and their works, there were also semester-long literature courses on both US and Colombian literary themes.⁵⁴

Public explorations of US and Colombian literature provided an opportunity to assert North and South American achievement in a realm of high culture historically dominated by Europeans. At the same time, for US cultural diplomats literature served as a vehicle for presenting the diversity and complexity of US culture, confronting Latin American stereotypes of the US, and constructing a transnational literary canon in support of Pan Americanism. Thus did Herschell Brickell, cultural attaché for the US embassy in Bogotá in the early 1940s, suggest novels for Colombians in which they

⁵³ "First Cycle of Conferences – CCA," 11 Feb. 1943, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

⁵⁴ Acta #4, 2 July 1942, Actas1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

would see North Americans as more than a “standardized people” who were “completely regulated by” chain newspapers, radio, movies, and transportation. A former New York Times literary critic, Brickell was well versed in Latin American literary traditions and loudly credited literature with expanding his knowledge and enthusiasm for Colombian culture. He encouraged Colombians to use US literature to a similar end because it manifests the “infinite variety of life” in the US.⁵⁵ Declaring that the US had, through “blood and sweat,” created its own literature “pretty well leaving behind the patterns of the Mother Country,” he proudly celebrated the contemporary popularity of US authors in England.⁵⁶ Brickell’s assertion --that US literature and culture was no longer dependent on European tradition and trends-- was reiterated in Colombo-Americano cultural programming throughout the decade. It resonated in Bogotá because Colombia was then reconsidering its own cultural dependencies on Europe.

US Cultural Influence: A View from Library Shelves

While literary lectures (and the press coverage they were given) were effective methods of introducing US and Colombian literature to wider audiences, to achieve deeper understanding of each nation’s literature more people would have to read it. Yet, as Daniel Samper’s wife had discovered in the late 1930s, works by US authors or books covering US themes were hardly available in Colombia. In the US, where growing academic and public interest in Latin America was on the rise, the situation was no better;

⁵⁵ Herschell Brickell, *Literatura Contemporanea Norte Americana*, trans. Enrique Uribe White (Bogotá: Prensa de la Biblioteca Nacional, 1943), p. 4.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Colombian and Latin American literature was equally unknown and largely unavailable to interested parties.⁵⁷

As new emphasis was placed on English language studies in the curriculum of Colombian secondary schools, the need for reading materials in English increased. As noted previously, basic level language textbooks and readers were in short supply. More advanced students of English needed novels. To the rector of the National University, novels were a “true vehicle of culture” [*verdadero vehículo de cultura*] and he encouraged university students to read English and American literature in their original language.⁵⁸ However, in a nation with a literacy rate well below 50%, successful second language acquisition would logically be limited to a select student population. In promoting mutual understanding through literature then, cultural policymakers from both nations recognized that reaching wide audiences required that works be translated into others’ national languages.

Beginning in the 1940s, the OIAA fueled an increased movement of translated books within the Americas, both from North to South and South to North. Responding to calls from many educational quarters, both the OIAA and State Department issued grants to individuals and publishers for the translation of major works by US writers into Spanish and Portuguese and, reciprocally, Latin American works into English. In doing so, they funded the construction and projection of a contemporary US literary canon abroad and a Latin American canon in the US. In the process, a broader Pan American canon also began to emerge, and it provided important literary alternatives to the European classics for educators and students throughout the Americas. While BNC

⁵⁷ Anita Melville Ker, “Interest in Hispanic America Manifested at Richmond Conference of the American Library Association,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 16, no. 3 (August 1936), pp. 402-409.

⁵⁸ “Un Gran Éxito Tuvo el Curso de Inglés Por Radio en Bogotá,” *ET*, 3 Dec. 1942.

libraries were not the exclusive repositories of the translated US books that began to appear in Latin America, they were a primary beneficiary of OIAA translation efforts.

BNC libraries were a major component of early cultural outreach in Latin America, and they were well received in Colombia. Prior to the education reforms of the 1930s, Colombian libraries were few in number and almost exclusively academic in content. Housed in universities and private clubs of the elite, access was restricted and patronage low. Under Liberal education reforms, enthusiasm for public libraries grew alongside literacy campaigns; they were celebrated as infrastructure of modernity. As literacy became a national priority, the Ministry of National Education embarked on an ambitious program to put reading materials within greater reach of the citizenry. Through the 1930s, several hundred village libraries [*bibliotecas aldeanas*] and mobile truck-based libraries appeared in the nation. Such libraries were small, had limited collections, and did not lend books; they mainly served as distribution points for government print materials. Poorly funded after their establishment, most of these libraries disappeared during middle decades of the 20th century.⁵⁹ Still, it is significant that US-sponsored libraries first appeared in Colombia at a time when enthusiasm for their development ran high. From both the US and Colombian perspectives, libraries were crucial institutions of modernity.⁶⁰

The library of the Colombo-Americano began as a collection of 900 books in a small room in the center.⁶¹ A commitment to cultural reciprocity was embedded in the

⁵⁹ Richard Krzys and Gaston Litton, *A History of Education for Librarianship in Colombia* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1969), p. 152.

⁶⁰ The notion that libraries were crucial to the achievement of modernity was at the center of PAU, State Department, OIAA, and USIA educational projects in Latin America. Héctor J. Maymí-Surgrañes, "The American Library Association in Latin America: American Librarianship as a 'Modern' Model during the Good Neighbor Policy Era," *Libraries & Culture* 37, no. 4 (Fall 2002), pp. 307-338.

⁶¹ Sauer to Donovan, 22 March 1943.

library's development, and the board attempted to maintain parity on the shelves; indeed, the stated goal of the center director was to add one Colombian book for each US publication it stocked.⁶² While this balance was not maintained after the first years, Spanish language books and other print media always remained a significant part of the library's collection. By 1946, for example, when the collection included over 4000 volumes and 70 magazines/newspapers subscriptions, approximately one-third of these materials were in Spanish.⁶³

Compared to most Colombian libraries, the Colombo-Americano library presented an organizational model suited to the information demands of an increasingly literate society. Designed with liberal borrowing privileges and open stacks, it extended wide public access in a city, country and region where closed stacks, limited book circulation, and intentionally limited patronage were the norm. The library employed the Dewey Decimal classification system and introduced modern storage technologies, such as microfilm. Additionally, library staffing projected the gendered pattern of US librarianship into Colombia; women constituted the entire library staff. Revealing a transnational gendering of the profession that was then in process, *Semana* magazine concluded library science was "one of the best careers for women, but, perhaps the least known in Colombia."⁶⁴ Overall, the library design reflected US trends in the emerging field of library science.

Within the US, the Library of Congress and the American Library Association provided technical guidance and institutional support for the development of community

⁶² "Un Brillante Realidad Son Los Institutos Culturales Americanos," *El Liberal* (Bogotá), 21 Dec. 1942.

⁶³ *Centro Colombo-Americano de Bogotá: Prospecto – 1945*; "El Centro Colombo-Americano," *Cromos*, 14 Sept. 1946, p. 26.

⁶⁴ "La biblioteconomía, una del las mejores carreras para la mujer, pero, tal vez la menos conocida, en 1947 empieza a interesar vivamente la muchachas bachilleras..." "Mujeres," *Semana*, 8 March 1947.

libraries. With grants to these organizations from the Pan American Union, these programs had extended to libraries in Latin America in the decades between the world wars. Later, as Washington's formal program of cultural diplomacy took shape, the OIAA and State Department opened three sizeable US libraries in the region, awarded grants for the development of BNC libraries, and offered US scholarships for Latin Americans women to train in librarianship.⁶⁵ They also funded visits of US librarians to the region, organized workshops for professional development, and in Colombia directly aided the establishment of library schools.⁶⁶ For these projects, Washington continued to rely on the staffs of the Library of Congress and the American Library Association.

As at other BNCs in Latin America, the Colombo-Americano library supported language learning courses by providing quiet study space along with reference and reading materials to language course students. However, the staff made tremendous efforts to attract patrons from the broader community and especially the emerging professional classes. For a nominal fee, locals could become *socios* [members] with full library privileges and access to all cultural programs.⁶⁷ There were special membership rates for academics, university and secondary students, intellectuals, and locally residing US citizens. Additionally, reference collections were developed around the needs of educators, physicians, engineers, dentists, and lawyers.⁶⁸

During World War II, demand for technical and science texts was especially pronounced in Colombia, and the library had little trouble attracting professionals and

⁶⁵ "Creanda una Beca Universitaria para una Mujer de Latinoamérica," *El Espectador* (Bogotá), 4 Oct. 1943.

⁶⁶ Carl Sauer, introductory remarks (speech delivered at the opening of circulating library of the Centro Colombo-Americano, Bogotá, Colombia, 9 March 1943), typescript copy, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

⁶⁷ "El Centro Colombo-Americano de Bogotá," *El Liberal* (Bogotá), 18 Sept. 1948.

⁶⁸ William L. Schurz, "Aspectos de la Obra Cultural de los EE.UU." 9 March 1943, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS; "Physicians, Engineers, Students"[advertisement], *ET*, 31 May 1944.

professionals-in-training as patrons.⁶⁹ Historically, European textbooks were used in Colombian university, professional and technical-training programs. Often, French texts were used in their original; they were not translated into Spanish because individuals reaching higher education had usually achieved French proficiency in secondary schools.⁷⁰ However, the war in Europe interrupted the flow of educational materials from France and other European nations, and as the Colombian education system expanded, lost its elite exclusivity, and placed greater emphasis on English, a market for US academic, professional, and technical books emerged. Locally residing US citizens, who were well connected in professional communities (or were themselves the product of Colombian schools), recognized a link between educational texts, cultural influence, and international business. Karl C. Parrish, Jr., of Barranquilla's coordination committee, adamantly argued to Rockefeller that it was not...

*difficult to see why Latin students, having depended for the most part on European texts, had always thought of Europe when opportunity arose to finish off their educations, and later had always been heavily inclined toward the use of European drugs and equipment, and the importation of European technical personnel.*⁷¹

Acting on Parrish's advice, the OIAA encouraged US publishers to enter Latin American educational markets, and they did so quickly. As new Spanish-language textbooks became available, the Colombo-Americano showcased them in book fairs held in the library and added reference copies to their shelves.⁷²

⁶⁹ "Noticero Cultural," *ET*, 25 Sept. 1944.

⁷⁰ Germán Arciniegas, "Existe Coordinación entre las Universidades Americanas?" *La Razón* (La Paz, Bolivia), Aug. 1948.

⁷¹ Karl C. Parrish, Jr. to Forney Rankin, 22 May 1945, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1358, F: Barranquilla from January 1944.

⁷² "Exposicion de Libros en Inglés para Ninos" [advertisement], *ET*, 25 Feb. 1948; "Books from various North American University Press" [advertisement], *ET*, 24 May 1948; E.M. Crane, D. (Van Nostrand Company) to Nelson Rockefeller, 20 April 1945, NARG 229, Records of the Inter-American Educational

Gallery Art: Visualizing Cultural Change

A third component of the Colombo-Americano cultural program was sponsorship of visual arts exhibitions in the center's own art gallery, the Sala Tayrona. Opening as the traditional boundaries of art and culture in Colombia were stretching, it was quickly integrated into the official cultural life of the city. As it evolved into a high profile cultural venue, it provided new space for shaping Colombianidad. Analysis of its activities demonstrates the extent to which the Colombo-Americano was evolving as a local rather than foreign cultural institution.

Before the mid-1930s, access to formal art and cultural venues in Bogotá was limited by the narrow frame of national culture. Change came as Liberal cultural management moved more programming to the social spaces of the popular classes and pushed open the doors of elite-exclusive theaters and museums. Cultural contestation contributed to high demand for art space and slowly new options appeared; the Sala Tayrona was one. Complementing these physical spaces, alternative cultural venues continued to open in print, on radio, and in film.⁷³

The expansion of cultural space and broadening definitions of culture proved unsettling in elite circles of the capital. Elite critics from both parties railed against Liberal expenditures on programs for the masses, lamented a decline in high culture, and dismissed the cultural value of mass media. Illustrative was a one critic who questioned the value of art exhibitions at the Sala Tayrona on the grounds that it was a venue

Foundation, B561, F:Inter-American Educational Foundation, Sept. 43 – Dec. 45; *The Inter-American Newsletter* 2, no. 2 (June 1944).

⁷³ Peralta, *Distinctions and Exclusions*, p. 6; Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society*, p. 343.

accessible primarily to students and, therefore, a waste of time.⁷⁴ However, a “democratization of culture” --encouraged by Liberal cultural management, supported by increasing literacy and expanding educational opportunities, and sustained by developing patterns in mass media communication-- was well underway and the historically narrow framing of Colombian culture and cultural space was no longer possible.

The Sala Tayrona was both host and contributor to Bogotá’s cultural transformation. Exhibitions and visual arts programming were frequently organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Education or other cultural organizations in the capital. While some US art was featured in the gallery through traveling shows funded by the State Department and North American museums, most exhibitions were organized at the local level and featured locally-residing artists, both Colombians and foreigners. Aspiring and established local artists welcomed the gallery and lined up to be included in one of its monthly exhibitions. Owing to the limited number of venues in the city, Colombian government officials themselves frequently relied on the gallery to host exhibitions they had organized. In light of its collaborative support of Colombian art through the 1940s, the Ministry of National Education praised the Colombo-Americano and its gallery as an important contributor to national culture.⁷⁵

Many of Colombia’s most celebrated artists of the 20th century exhibited their works at the gallery during their formative years, well before achieving national and international fame. Among others, Enrique Grau, Fernando Botero, Edgar Negret, Eduardo Ramirez Villamizar, Gonzalo Ariza, and Rodrigo Arenas Betancour presented

⁷⁴ Jorge Moreno Clavijo, “Tres Pintores Suramericano en Bogotá,” *Cromos*, 30 Aug. 1947, p. 6. On Conservative and moderate Liberal opposition to the opening of elite cultural spaces to the masses, see Muñoz, “To Colombianize Colombia,” Chapter 2, pp. 78-129.

⁷⁵ Carlos López Narváez to John Floyd, 16 July 1946, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS; Program, “Exposition of Painting by Gustavo Lopez,” 10 Oct. 1948, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS; “Joven Pintora Habla Sobre el Arte Colombiana Actual,” *El Liberal* (Bogotá), 6 July 1946.

their work to the public in the Sala Tayrona. The gallery was particularly popular because it was a not-for-profit venture and assisted in the sale of pieces without charge to the artists. In lieu of commissions on the sales of gallery pieces, written contracts between the center and artists commonly negotiated the donation or a discounted purchase of one of the works on display. Across the twentieth-century, accumulation of art by this method left the center with a museum quality collection hanging on public display in the corridors and common areas of its downtown Bogotá facility.⁷⁶ Recognizable to anyone familiar with Colombian art, the impressive collection of the center attests to the institution's evolution as a local Colombian rather than foreign cultural center.

Most of the artists exhibiting work in the Sala Tayrona never became household names in Colombia or abroad, but transnational connections and lifestyles were commonplace among them. Artists who were Colombian citizens born of foreign parents or Colombians born abroad were frequent exhibitors. Margarita Soto de Murphy, for example, who was born in the US but of Colombian ancestry, painted typical street scenes of Bogotá. Moving between her and her family's native lands, vacationing in Mexico, and painting the roads she traveled, Soto de Murphy's transnational identity proved as intriguing to the Bogotá press as her watercolors.⁷⁷ The gallery hosted Emile Roure, an art teacher in Miami who had been born to French parents in California; he displayed oil paintings that took rural mestizo and indigenous cultures as subject.

Ephraim Andrade from neighboring Ecuador, Heinz Tesch from Germany, and Ladislav

⁷⁶ The archives of the Centro-Colombo Americano includes catalogs, programs, invitations to opening receptions, press releases, clippings from press coverage, and photographs documenting the regular art exhibitions of these and many other Colombian artists in the Sala Tayrona. See: LHI, CCA/Bogotá MSS. For a brief overview of Colombian art in the twentieth century see Francisco Gil Tovar, *El Arte Colombiano* (Bogotá: Plaza & Janés, 2002), pp. 105-170.

⁷⁷ "Joven Pintora Habla Sobre el Arte Colombiana Actual," *El Liberal*, 6 July 1946; "Comentada Exposición Pictora de Dona Margarita Soto Murphy en el Centro Colombo-Americano," *ET*, 1 July 1946.

Hlavka for Czechoslovakia were part of a constant stream of foreigners whose Colombia-focused art hung in the Sala Tayrona.⁷⁸ Among the resident US nationals given shows, most were women and the wives of US diplomats and businessmen. Some were US wives of Colombian citizens or the adult daughters of transnational marriages.⁷⁹ The preponderance of biculturalism among Sala Tayrona artists in the 1940s raises interesting questions about the status of arts education in Colombian schools as well as gender roles within expatriate and diplomatic communities. However, another point is more immediately clear. The center's gallery regularly contracted artists who brought transnational perspective to their work. With mutual understanding the primary goal of its cultural programs, the center valued such artists because their lives transcended cultural borders; they and their art, like the Colombo-Americano itself, were neither completely foreign nor entirely local.

The Sala Tayrona and its visual arts programs were also important for establishing US credentials in the art world and invalidating dismissive Latin American stereotypes about US culture. The OIAA and State Department funded tours of European fine art from US museum collections to demonstrate the nation's appreciation for high culture; one was the South American tour of the Rosenwald Collection of French and Spanish masters from the National Gallery of Art in Washington. Jointly sponsored in Bogotá by the Colombo-Americano and Ministry of National Education, the show attracted 1,800 people to the National Library, and in the process, familiarized many with the cultural programs of the center. Such tours of European art from US collections created an

⁷⁸ Invitation, "Paintings from the Czechoslovakian Artist – Ladislav Hlavka," 28 Jan. 1945, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS; "Noticero Cultural," *ET*, 4 Sept. 1947; "Artes y Letras," *El Liberal* (Bogotá), 16 July 1947; "Mañana se Abrirá la Exposición de Oleos de Señor Emile Roure," *ET*, 16 Oct. 1945.

⁷⁹ Invitation, "Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture by the Women of the American Colony," 2 June 1945, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS; "Noticero Cultural," *ET*, 4 Sept. 1947; "Noticero Cultural," *ET*, 14 Aug. 1947.

opportunity for US and Latin American commentators to acknowledge their nations' "common cultural debt" with Europe.⁸⁰ However, more than establishing US credibility vis-à-vis European high culture, the overall visual arts programming put US and Latin American art on display and engaged a discourse to validate it. Accompanying the regular showings of American art (broadly defined), lectures and press commentary stressed that while the art of the Americas had roots in European tradition, it had evolved independently and uniquely.⁸¹ Declaring a new reality in the art world and pointing Latin Americans toward arts education in the US, University of Michigan Professor Harold E. Wethey told an audience at the center "there are now many good American painters that have never traveled to Europe or studied in its schools."⁸²

That contemporary Latin American art had gained new stature in US cultural circles was also clear. The Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, Nelson Rockefeller, was himself a board director of New York's Museum of Modern Art. His enthusiasm for Latin American art is well documented and he personally encouraged art exchanges and acquisitions between US and Latin American museums. When traveling in Latin America in his official government capacity, building both transnational connections and collections among art museums was always on his agenda.⁸³ Thus when he arrived in Bogotá for the inauguration of the Colombo-Americano, his two traveling companions were the curator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and a board member of the Museum of Modern Art.

⁸⁰ Gonzalo Ariza, "La Colección Rosenwald en Bogotá: Sentido de una Exposición," *ET*, 6 May 1945.

⁸¹ Sam Lewisohn, "Snobism and Sensationalism in Art," 30 April 1943 (speech delivered at Centro Colombo-Americano), typescript copy, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

⁸² Harold E. Wethey, "Temas de Arte: La Pintura Contemporáneo Norteamericana," 2 Feb. 1944 (speech delivered at Centro Colombo-Americano), typescript copy, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

⁸³ Rivas, *Missionary Capitalist*, pp. 19-21

As new forces broadened notions of culture in Colombia, the Sala Tayrona, as a local art venue, both reflected and encouraged this transformational process. Complementing a decreased focus on European fine art and validation of broadly-defined American art, center programming elevated non-traditional artists, welcomed popular art trends, and explored modern techniques of art production and framing. The gallery featured the caricature sketches of local newspaper cartoonists and the ceramics of students from local secondary schools.⁸⁴ Gallery talks celebrated the artistic achievements of the laboring classes in the projects of the Works Progress Administration in the United States.⁸⁵ Photography, then growing more accessible to a wider public and evolving into a popular art form, was also well represented in shows.⁸⁶ At the same time, exhibitions of modern graphic arts --with drawings reproduced through contemporary print technologies (especially automated lithography and serigraphy)-- were hung for viewing and sanctioned as gallery-appropriate. While the US held no monopoly on artistic trends in printmaking, some Colombian observers believed that US artists were stretching the traditional boundaries of art “in unison” [*al unísono*] with the impressive pace of technical progress in the country.⁸⁷

Art on the walls of the Sala Tayrona also reflected a contemporary Colombian trend toward more diverse race/ethnic representations of the nation. In the gallery, Afro-Colombians and Indians were important subjects of artistic representations, and this trend reflected a broader movement in Latin American art. Observable in the contemporary works of Mexicans Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco, Brazilian Candido

⁸⁴ “Noticero Cultural,” *ET*, 19 March 1944; “Noticero Cultural,” *ET*, 20 Dec. 1948.

⁸⁵ Gonzalo Ariza, “Arte Americano: Public Works Administration,” *ET*, 6 May 1945.

⁸⁶ Exhibit Announcement, “Art Under Fire,” 25 June 1947, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

⁸⁷ “Grabados Americanos,” *ET*, 26 May 1946; Invitation to opening reception, “Original Drawings by Contemporary North American Artists,” 12 May 1946, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

Portinari, and Ecuadoran Oswaldo Guayasamín among others, this new approach to art celebrated rather than downplayed the multi-racial reality of Latin America. More inclusive visual representations of nation still reflected contemporary cultural and race/ethnic biases, and that fact should not be overlooked. Still, in Colombia new diversity of subject in visual arts helped to complicated traditional artistic projections that had sustained the fiction of elite, urban, and Andean Colombianidad.

By far, the most popular subject of exhibitions in the Sala Tayrona and, indeed, in most Colombo-American art galleries that opened later in other cities, was the Colombian Caribbean. Encouraged by rapid development of the Colombian airline industry, the Caribbean was then emerging as a prime tourist destination for the Andean interior. Art reflected this development and served as a colorful vehicle for reinserting and reconstructing the region in the national imaginary. The walled city of Cartagena with its famous colonial architecture was a popular focus of the center's exhibitors, and paintings in the Sala Tayrona captured the beauty of the coast while suggesting a playfulness in Caribbean lifestyle. At the same time, this art increasingly took Afro-Caribbean inhabitants of the coast as subjects, and in doing so documented on canvas a little-considered Colombian reality of poverty and race.⁸⁸

Complementing representations of coastal Colombia and its people, paintings and drawings of Indians and peasants of the rural interior were also standard features of Sala Tayrona exhibits.⁸⁹ In contrast to the absence of Afro-Colombian culture, symbolic celebration of the nation's Indian past was a constant of Liberal cultural programs.

⁸⁸ Catalog for Exhibition of Heinz Tesch, 16 July 1947, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

⁸⁹ "Noticero Cultural," *ET*, 29 March 1944; Albert H. Gerberick, "Emile Anthony Roure, pintor norteamericano," *Revista del Colegio Mayor de Nuestra Señora del Rosario* 39, no. 379-380 (1944), pp. 78-81; Heinz Tesch Catalog, 16 July 1947; Invitation to Gallery Reception, Exhibition of Alfred Jung, 17 Oct. 1953, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

Sanctioning ancient cultures as authentically Colombian, Liberal cultural managers selectively employed pre-Colombian cultural forms in their attempts to construct a unifying national culture. Grounded in the philosophy of *indigenismo*, these cultural managers selectively incorporated cultural products of long-vanished Indian civilizations into national folklore. Then in vogue throughout hemisphere, political indigenismo exalted Indians' past but lamented their present lack of modernization.⁹⁰ By the twentieth century, Indian populations in Colombia were a small percentage of the population, and the philosophy did not have the political legs it had in other areas of the Americas. However, under the cultural management of the Liberal state, influence of indigenismo was unmistakable.

A similar strain of indigenismo was observable in the US during this era, and US cultural diplomacy projected it in Latin America. Employing variant forms of indigenismo, both nations used rich indigenous cultural material toward constructing more inclusive national identity. Yet, their increasing valuations of indigenous culture were more about cultures of past than of the present; both nations were interested in integration and modernization of the Indian and not a return to past indigenous glory. In the developing Pan American dialogue, traditional Indian culture proved useful to the construction of historical narratives that connected all areas of the hemisphere. The contemporary celebration of Indian cultures in both the US and Colombia provided historical grounds upon which Pan American identity could be constructed.

⁹⁰ On indigenismo in Latin America see: Marisol de la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos: The Politics of Race and Culture in Cuzco, Peru, 1919-1991* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); Greg Urban and Joel Sherzer, eds. *Nation-States and Indians in Latin America* (Austin: Texas University Press, 1991); Alexander S. Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004); Graham, *The Idea of Race in Latin America*.

In the visual arts programs of the Colombo-Americano, US educators engaged the philosophy to showcase the indigenous roots their nation shared with Colombia and to validate the frequent assertion of a broadly-defined American, or Pan American, culture. Within the Sala Tayrona, a current of indigenismo ran strong. Introducing a lecture on Indian art in the Americas, the center director declared that philosophy of indigenismo was “important for everyone --regardless of Indian blood-- because it is the basis of American heritage and identity.”⁹¹ Other gallery talks emphasized the strong influences of the “Indian cities” of Taos and Santa Fe on US art markets. Promotional information the gallery provided to the local press stressed US appreciation for its own Indian cultures and art.⁹² Indeed, the very name of the gallery honored the Tayrona Indians, who had successfully resisted the European conquest on Colombia’s Caribbean coast four-hundred years earlier. Symbolic as an authentic American, authentic Colombian, and anti-European culture, the Tayrona name was well chosen for the mission.

Transnational Sounds: Music at the Colombo-Americano

Finally, music was the fourth major component of Colombo-Americano cultural programming, and it too played an important role in stretching the traditional boundaries of culture in the Colombian capital. Not dependent on linguistic translation, musical presentations attracted large crowds to the center. From the start, all music programs were open to the public and, similar to the visual arts programs, maintained considerable focus on Colombian artists. In the first decade, the centerpiece of the program was a weekly live concert by a Colombian musician. Although European classical music and opera were the most common genres of these concerts, the overall music program was

⁹¹ Carl Sauer, “Notes for conferencia de Rene d’Harmoncourt” (introductory remarks to introduce lecture in the Sala Tayrona), 2 June 1943, typescript copy, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

⁹² Wethey, “Temas de Arte”; “Noticero Cultural,” *ET*, 10 July 1947.

broader and also showcased popular US and traditional Colombian music. Significantly, the music program also linked Colombians to US universities and schools as alternatives to music education in Europe.

From the start, the weekly Young Artist Series supported rising music stars. Participants in the series were young Colombians who the center directly assisted in securing scholarships for the study of music in the US. The inaugural performance was by Jaime León, a pianist who was “on his way to Julliard.”⁹³ Cecilia Dueñas, a celebrated soprano was a Young Artist as well. While studying opera in Colombia under a French professor, Dueñas began to study English at the Colombo-Americano. There, she also gave concerts, which proved hugely popular and brought acclaim. By 1946, with the assistance of the center’s staff, Dueñas had secured a scholarship to the University of Miami’s School of Music.⁹⁴ Similarly, Young Artist Oscar Buenaventura was a pianist and composer sponsored by the center. After winning a national music competition in Colombia in 1944, the center supported his application to the music program of the University of Rochester (New York). Granted a scholarship, he enrolled in 1945. Before returning to Colombia a few years later, Buenaventura worked with US composer Aaron Copeland and toured the world with various musical groups. By his own assessment, some of his performances reflected US musical influences but his own compositions drew most heavily on Colombian folkloric and popular themes. Back in Colombia, he continued to perform at the Colombo-Americano, supported its local music program, and,

⁹³ Program, Piano Recital by Jaime León, 28 Aug. 1943, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

⁹⁴ Program, Concert by Cecilia Dueñas, 27 Nov. 1943, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS; “Cecilia Dueñas en la Opera Metropolitana a de N. York?” *El Liberal* (Bogotá), 17 April 1946; “Conocida Cantante Perfeccionará sus Estudios en Miami,” *ET*, 18 Sept. 1946.

notably, was later enlisted by his government to perform abroad in its own program of cultural diplomacy.⁹⁵

Those pursuing music scholarships in the US were not the only Colombian performers at the center. Among others, student choruses from the National Conservatory of Music, young children from the center's rhythm band, local music teachers, and the military's own marching band performed under center sponsorship. European classical music was the theme in many such performances, but the traditional popular music of Colombia's Andean interior was also showcased. In promoting popular Andean music through concerts, as well as offering classes in the traditional dances to accompany the music, the center supported the Liberal cultural agenda by validating folkloric manifestations of Colombian popular culture.⁹⁶ Though the music of the Colombian Caribbean (or Costeño music) was then gaining in popularity and experiencing a commercial boom that soon elevated it to national and international stature, it was then only barely audible at the center. It was not endorsed by official government cultural management as authentically Colombian. Commercialization was its route to national popularity, and thus was it deemed less desirable as a representation of the nation. Andean racial stereotypes of African-influenced Costeño culture were a contributing factor.⁹⁷

Comparatively, live performances by US musicians were less regular. Featured musicians were most often drawn from locally residing US citizens including the

⁹⁵ Program, Recital of Oscar Buenaventura, 21 June 1952, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS; "Recital de Pianista Oscar Buenaventura Habrá Mañana," *El Espectador* (Bogotá), 20 June 1952.

⁹⁶ List of Upcoming Programs, 14 April 1944, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS; John Floyd to Dear Friend, 18 Nov. 1947, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS; Invitation to Independence Day celebration, 4 July 1951, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS; Program, Recital of Aime Rosier, 26 Aug. 1944; Clifford Prator to American Community of Bogotá, 1944, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

⁹⁷ Wade, *Music, Race, & Nation*, p. 27.

teaching and administrative staff of the center as well as the “Ladies of the American Colony,” the musical wives of diplomats and resident businessmen.⁹⁸ Occasionally, touring musicians from the US gave concerts at the center; some such tours were underwritten by US government funds, but others were independent and/or commercial ventures. Once Cold War policymakers recognized the international appeal and political power of live jazz, Washington would substantially increased funding for music tours. However, through the 1940s most of the US music played at the center had been previously recorded on discs. During much of the first decade, contemporary US music was played on record machines in the common areas of the center between day and evening classes as a social outlet for students. More formal “disc concerts” presenting a specific musical genre, musician, or theme were scheduled twice a week.⁹⁹ Records also provided the music for bimonthly and semester’s end dances; priced with middle class youth in mind, these well attended dances welcomed students and their “guests of the opposite sex.”¹⁰⁰ Big band, jazz, folk, and music from Broadway were popular at these events. By the end of the war, various genres of Latin American music were also common at the center’s dances. Recordings from Cuba, Argentina and Mexico increased the international sounds at Colombo-Americano social events.

The music collection housed in the Colombo-Americano library was the nucleus of a musical outreach program in the capital area. More than a collection of record albums, the American Music Loan Library, as it was known, was a vast collection of music resources that could be borrowed for up to two weeks: sheet music for piano,

⁹⁸ Program Announcement, 12 July 1947, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS; John Floyd to Dear Friend, Sept. 1946, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

⁹⁹ Music Lists, “Conciertos de Discos,” 1945 (weekly lists of all records played), LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

¹⁰⁰ List of Upcoming Activities, 1943, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS; Schedule of Programs, June 1944, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

voice, quartets, bands, and orchestras; folk songs for Colombian teachers of English; and recordings for loan to commercial radio stations and educational organizations. The initial collection was heavy on US titles and compositions, but Latin American and European classical music were also well represented.¹⁰¹ Bringing the American Music Loan Library into Latin American BNCs was an OIAA project, but the program had been established years earlier through the Pan American Union's efforts to connect musicians throughout the Americas. At PAU-sponsored congresses in the 1930s, musicians, composers and professional organizations from both continents identified two related roadblocks to greater music sharing in the Americas: the lack of availability of North American music in South America (and vice versa) together with the lack of international copyright protections for musical scores. The American Music Loan Library emerged as a solution to these roadblocks, and as US cultural diplomacy developed, BNCs became the logical place to house and build collections in Latin America.¹⁰²

Notably, Negro spirituals and North American Indian songs were included in the collection and prominently featured in Colombo-Americano disc concerts.¹⁰³ Their inclusion represented an effort on the part of the OIAA and State Department to proactively project US appreciation and respect for its minority cultures. In racially-mixed Latin America, where those with African or Indian ancestry were the majority, domestic US race relations were a potentially disastrous obstacle to Pan Americanism. With growing Latin American attention to the status of minority communities in the US, the OIAA became concerned that US race relations would derail progress toward mutual

¹⁰¹ Music Lists, "Conciertos de Discos," 1945; "Monthly Events and Programs," March 1948, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

¹⁰² Charles Seeger, "Music Education in the Americas," *Music Educators Journal* 30, no. 6 (May-June 1944); John W. Beattie and Lewis Woodson Curtis, "South American Music Pilgrimage I: Colombia," *Music Educators Journal* 28, no. 2 (November 1941).

¹⁰³ Music Lists, "Conciertos de Discos," 1945.

understanding. Rockefeller accepted the assertion of advisers that treatment of minorities, and particularly impoverished Hispanics of the US Southwest, represented an “acid test” for the new Pan Americanism.¹⁰⁴ He consistently amplified the recommendation of advisers that “sounder and more consistently democratic practices of race at home are necessary for the successful prosecution” of inter-American foreign policy programs.¹⁰⁵

While a full analysis of the intersection of Pan Americanism and race in Colombia is not the objective here, it is none-the-less important to recognize that domestic race relations did condition US cultural diplomacy in Latin America during World War II.¹⁰⁶ Some historians have demonstrated that global reaction to US race relations during the Cold War elicited federal government activism on behalf of African-American legal equality.¹⁰⁷ Yet, less attention has been paid to transnational dimensions of the US civil rights struggles that are visible in the Pan American programming of the 1940s.¹⁰⁸ Within the cultural programs considered by this study, Colombian and US racial orders converged and collided as the new Pan Americanism evolved. As mutual understanding became a privileged objective of diplomacy, substantial differences distinguished Colombian and US race systems: acceptance (Colombia) vs. the rejection (US) of race-mixture; the absence vs. the presence of legally sanctioned discrimination

¹⁰⁴ Ben Cherrington to OIAA, “Proposal,” 1942, NARG 229, Records of the Department of Basic Economy, Planning and Analysis, Records Relating to Minorities (hereafter DBE/Minorities), B1717, F: Ben Cherrington Proposal.

¹⁰⁵ Quote is from Alain L. Locke, “The Negro in the Three Americas,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 13, no.1 (Winter 1944), p. 10. See also: Charles Johnson, “The Negro and the Present Crisis,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 10, no. 3 (July 1941), p. 594; Institute of International Education, *Report of the Committee of Foreign Student Advisers, Cleveland, Ohio: April 28-30, 1942* (NY: IIE, 1942), p. 308.

¹⁰⁶ Comparisons of race relations between the US and Latin America are common themes in race scholarship, but less attention has been paid to the transnational construction of racial orders. On this point see, Nancy P. Appelbaum, Anne S. Macpherson, and Karin Alejandra Roseblatt, “Introduction: Racial Nations,” in *Race & Nation in Modern Latin America*, pp. 12-13.

¹⁰⁷ See especially Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights* and Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line*.

¹⁰⁸ For an important contribution on this theme see, Justin Hart, “Making Democracy Safe for the World: Race, Propaganda, and the Transformation of U.S. Foreign Policy during World War II,” *Pacific Historical Review* 73, no. 1 (February 2004), pp. 49-84.

against blacks; and the predominance of three racially categorized groups in Colombia (Indians, Africans, Spaniards) vs. the more complex, multi-racial/multi-ethnic composition of the US. Because racial orders were fundamental structures of US and Colombian societies, a transnational discourse on race logically developed as groups and individuals from both nations worked toward deeper understanding of the other.

To many Colombians and Latin Americans, Jim Crow segregation was evidence that the US did not live up to the tenets of equality and freedom that it so loudly professed. Condemnation of US racism was common among those who opposed US-led Pan Americanism and especially strong among the most vocal advocates of *Hispanidad*.¹⁰⁹ In Colombia and throughout Latin America critics buttressed their condemnation of US race relations with assertions that their nations were racial democracies where race discrimination simply did not exist. That was hardly the case and, indeed, some contemporary US scholars pointed out the discriminatory realities and nuances of race relations in Latin America.¹¹⁰ Yet, compared to glaring, legally sanctioned segregation in the US, more subtle forms of racism in the mixed-race region were less exposed to an international spotlight. Still many observers in the US agreed that the Latin American model of race relations represented a major improvement over that of the US South, and they repeatedly expressed the hope that the US would learn racial

¹⁰⁹ Caballero Calderon, *Latinoamérica: un mundo por hacer*; Bailey W. Diffie, "The Ideology of *Hispanidad*," *HAHR*, p. 462.

¹¹⁰ Lewis Hanke, "The Incorporation of Indians and Negroes into Latin American Life," *The Journal of Negro Education* 10, no. 3 (July 1941), pp. 504-509; Richard Pattee, "The Efforts Made in Latin America to Document the History of the Negro," *The Journal of Negro History* 24, no. 1 (January 1939), pp. 57-64; Furbay, *Education in Colombia*; Luis Alberto Sánchez, "On the Problem of the Indian in South America," *The Journal of Negro Education* 10, no. 3, trans. Gloria Rodriguez and Logan Rayford (July 1941) pp. 493-503.

tolerance from its Good Neighbors.¹¹¹ OIAA film and print publications joined the chorus and in doing so uncritically seconded Latin American assertions of racial democracy.¹¹²

New Latin American interest in US minority communities and discrimination against them prompted the OIAA to respond at home and abroad. On the domestic front, Rockefeller's office promoted open dialogue among US educators over racial issues. It funneled resources toward improvements in educational conditions for African-American, Hispanic, and Native American communities in the US.¹¹³ The OIAA publicized its domestic efforts in Latin America and encouraged BNCs to engage a more positive discourse on US minority cultures. This discourse was evident in Colombo-American cultural programming: lectures on indigenismo and Indian artistry, a music course highlighting black jazz musicians, OIAA pamphlets sympathetically portraying "Spanish-Speaking Americans at War," and efforts to keep racially biased texts off the library shelves.¹¹⁴ Music recordings of Negro spirituals by Marion Anderson and hunting songs by Shawnee and Cheyenne Indians were just a small part of a larger effort to neutralize the racial roadblock to mutual understanding.

Conclusion

Examining the cultural programming of Centro Colombo-Americano de Bogotá during its first decade, increasing contact among musicians and music enthusiasts in the

¹¹¹ White, *Our Good Neighbor Hurdle*, p. 11; Arnold Hedgeman, "The Role of the Negro Woman," *Journal of Educational Sociology* 17, no. 8 (April 1944), p. 469; Louis Olom to Walter Laves, 7 April 1942, NARG 229, DBE/Minorities, B1717, F: Negro File.

¹¹² In the OIAA film *Colombia- Crossroads of the America*, for example, the narrator declares: "Colombians are far more tolerant of the differences of race and color than we are...and may well serve as examples to their North American neighbors." Julien Bryan, *Colombia- Crossroads of the Americas*, National Archives and Record Administration, Motion Picture, Sound, and Video Section (hereafter NARG 306), NARG 306.41; OIAA, *Bulletin of United States Activities*, April 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC B1362, F: Bogotá Correspondence.

¹¹³ See OIAA "Records Relating to Minorities," NARG 229, DBE/Minorities.

¹¹⁴ Carl Sauer, "Notes for conferencia de Rene d'Harmoncourt.," OIAA, *Bulletin of United States Activities*, April 1944; Course Outline, "Music Course: The Development of North American Music," Sept. 1948, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS; "Scores Textbooks on Latin America," *NYT*, 28 Nov. 1943.

Americas is clear. New energy for musical dialogue, resource sharing, and professional exchanges characterized the period. As evidenced by the center's activities, participants in Colombo-Americano music programs constructed foundations to support emerging transnational music communities. The chapter demonstrates a similar phenomenon of community development beginning among academics and intellectuals, artists, librarians, professionals, educators, and students.

In the 1940s, official US-Colombian cultural engagement in Bogotá was built upon a foundation of common interests. From the start, the Centro Colombo-Americano positioned itself to respond to local Colombian realities. Common interests of Colombian and US citizens and their governments in cultural diffusion and educational expansion propelled the center's early successes. Appearing as European influence was waning in the capital, the programs of the center provided a platform from which the traditional boundaries of Colombian culture were dismantled and stereotypes of US culture were reduced. Certainly, Washington played a crucial role in funding the activities of the center and supporting the new transnational communities and networks that were appearing around it. The programs of the Colombo-Americano, like those of the local American school, explicitly asked Colombians to reconsider the US as both a legitimate cultural producer and an accessible cultural resource. Many did, and in the process, the US achieved one of its primary foreign policy objectives: it gained stature among the Colombian middle, professional and upper classes. But, it is a mistake to overemphasize Washington's foreign policy objectives in an analysis of foreign/local encounters in and around these US-Colombian cultural institutions. Doing so underemphasizes the centrality of local dynamics to these encounters; it dismisses the existence of and

complexities in transnational cultural relationships and the communities that support them; it draws sharp distinctions between foreign and local forces that are sustainable in grand theory but not on the ground; and it ignores the role of common interests in conditioning encounters between US and Colombian cultures.

Chapter Six

Modernity, Mass Media and US Cultural Diplomacy

This chapter examines the implementation of US-sponsored educational and cultural programs via radio, film, and print media in Colombia during World War II. Like the programs of the Centro Colombo-Americano and the American schools in Colombia, these mass media programs were initiated in the earliest days of US cultural diplomacy. As such, they were grounded by the philosophy of Pan Americanism, and their initial aim was to cultivate mutual understanding as a basis for hemispheric unity. Yet, OIAA film, radio, and print media programming had broader radius than the US-sponsored schools and cultural centers, and they reached more diverse populations across vast regions. In contrast to the institutions of US cultural diplomacy, these programs were not run by local boards. Nor were they structured upon cultural reciprocity. Thus, as war-related propaganda became a Washington mandate in the early 1940s, mass media programs could be easily adapted to short-term foreign policy objectives.

This chapter puts the evolution of OIAA radio, film, and print media campaigns into local context and demonstrates how mass media programs met overlapping political and social objectives of the US and Colombian governments. Furthermore, it reveals that such programming also provided Colombian individuals, organizations, institutions, businesses, and emerging social classes with resources for fashioning their own approaches to modernity. Significantly, the convergence of US mass media resources with Colombian interests was particularly pronounced in the realm of education. Though direct political propaganda became a strong element in the OIAA programming mix,

Colombians most actively engaged with educational and cultural rather than political materials. Analyzing foreign/local encounters that evolved around OIAA mass media reveals the extent to which the broad Colombian-US relationship was defined by transnational educational and cultural connections; it also demonstrates the rise of the US as an educational and cultural alternative to European influence. To these end, the first section contextualizes the emergence of mass media as an innovative diplomatic tool, a weapon of war, and an experimental instructional technology. Three subsequent sections historicize the OIAA print media, radio, and film programs during the war.

Introduction: Mass Media and Foreign/Local Encounters

On Sunday evenings in the 1940s just south of Bogotá's city center, Monseñor Diego Garzón offered free weekly movie showings for his congregation in the barrio of Las Cruces. The pastor publicized these showings from the pulpit during mass, and this produced huge crowds with as many as 7,000 regulars gathering after dusk on the plaza. The atmosphere at these weekly screenings was festive and relaxed, and it contrasted sharply with the formality of the church services many had attended earlier in the day. Projected from the balcony of the rectory, the various films the monseñor offered for viewing were supplied by the OIAA through its Bogotá coordination committee.

As darkness fell elsewhere across Bogotá, similar scenes played out. In the barrio of 7 de Agosto, just north of the city center, Father Joaquín Caicedo also hosted a weekly evening of film for his parishioners. There, enthusiasm for OIAA-supplied films also ran high. To facilitate viewing for the large crowds that always gathered, the priest had painted an outside wall of his church to serve as a huge movie screen. During the

showings, Father Caicedo used a microphone to inject positive comments. Between films, as the reels were changed, he made parish announcements and offered prayers.¹

Requests for loans of OIAA films and projection equipment from churches, local governments, schools, political and cultural organizations were steady in Bogotá and urban Colombia throughout the war years. Letters and notes poured into coordination committee offices seeking loans from the OIAA film library in Colombia that by 1945 contained more than 300 educational, cultural, and war propaganda titles. While there was always greater demand than the committees could meet, OIAA representatives in Bogotá were especially enthusiastic about parish-based movie nights like those offered by Monseñor Garzón and Father Caicedo, and they did their best to accommodate them. Though the social and cultural hegemony of the Catholic Church was then loosening, parish priests remained authoritative figures and cultural mediators in their communities. Thus, the OIAA welcomed collaboration with priests and other community leaders because their public endorsements of OIAA films lent legitimacy to a broad US mass media campaign aimed at bringing a message of hemispheric unity to the widest possible Colombian audience.

In contrast to the middle and upper-class focused education and cultural programs at BNCs and American schools, OIAA mass media programming reached a broader, cross-class spectrum of the population. Though the influential elite along with the emerging middle class remained important target audiences of these mass media programs, so too were the urban and rural poor, who constituted the Colombian majority. Barrio film showings in Las Cruces, 7 de Agosto and hundreds of other neighborhoods

¹ Forney Rankin, "Cooperation with the Coordination Committee for Colombia," 31 Jan. 1945, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1378, F: Reports 1945.

throughout the nation granted the OIAA easy access to a public that included non-elites, the urban poor, and the laboring --rather than the middle and professional-- classes. Like other contemporary OIAA mass media efforts on radio and in print, the barrio film campaign reached many Colombians who could never afford a ticket to a commercial cinema, who would likely never enroll in a class at or visit the art gallery of the Centro Colombo-Americano, and who would never have access to the classrooms of Colombia's American schools.

Though hardly acknowledged in previous scholarship, the OIAA played a central role in the expanding presence of US mass media in Latin America before mid-century. Trying its best not to compete with extant US commercial media in Colombia, the OIAA employed the changing communication technologies of the era to speak directly to the Colombian people on behalf of US foreign policy. Examining how OIAA film, radio and print media evolved in Colombia, this chapter details foreign/local encounters that unfolded around mass media programs that originated with the Pan Americanism of the pre-war years. The general US goal of mutual understanding grounded the early development of the programs, and educational and cultural collaboration with Colombians at the local level facilitated implementation. Yet, as World War II became the overriding concern in Washington, OIAA mass media programs became more intimately tied to the US war effort. Unlike the BNCs and American schools that were directed by local boards and structured by cultural reciprocity, mass media programs emanated from Washington and were more easily manipulated to serve short-term foreign policy goals.

In contrast to the BNCs and schools that fostered transnational educational communities through dialogue, reciprocity, and cultural exchange, the mass media programs of the OIAA appear as one-way information delivery mechanism that did not create community among participants. Formulated in Washington, programs were part education, part information, part entertainment, and part propaganda; the precise mix of the parts varied by program, but they were message driven and centered on specific diplomatic objectives. Diplomats always exercised strong control over them, something that was neither possible nor desirable with the BNCs and schools. However, when these mass media programs are placed in historical context, a high degree of collaboration between the OIAA and local Colombian organizations and individuals is evident. Though much of the design of the mass media messages came from Washington, program implementation at the local level, as explored below, involved many filters that altered the message to fit local needs. As was the case with BNCs and American schools, common interests between Colombian and US nationals conditioned their development. Exploring foreign/local encounters around the mass media programs of the OIAA further reveals the complexities that structured Colombian-US relations at mid-century.

In the scholarship on Latin American-US relations written during the second half of the 20th century, a pronounced trend defined US mass media in Latin America as a powerful agent of cultural imperialism or cultural dominance. Focused largely on the US media presence at the end of the century, this scholarship was narrowly framed by economic analysis. Although cultural engagement through mass media received only minimal consideration, scholars were quick to assume US cultural dominance via mass media wherever US economic dominance was in evidence. Drawing on dependency

theory, the common trope of a US media octopus, with tentacles attaching to unsuspecting and powerless prey, prevailed in scholarship as well as in the literature of the political left, in both countries, with which it was closely associated.²

Metaphors of sea life aside, a strong US mass media presence in Latin America before mid-20th century is undeniable, and the Colombian case is no exception: Hollywood film dominated Colombian cinema even before the 1930s; radio stations featured US music and advertised US-made consumer goods from that same decade forward; and before Europe went to war for a second time in two decades, many Colombian newspapers and magazines relied on advertising income from local offices of US companies; some periodicals simultaneously used US wire services for filling blank columns with news, feature stories and photographs. Then, in the 1940s, the US mass media presence in Colombia increased significantly through the developing program of cultural diplomacy. Before the middle of that decade in Colombia, more than ninety radio stations aired OIAA programs, more than five million viewers had seen OIAA films, and approximately three dozen daily and weekly newspapers and magazines used OIAA-supplied news and feature stories. Still, a dominating US cultural influence in Colombia should not be automatically inferred from such a strong mass media presence. In the absence of historical context, scholarship in the past casually granted US mass media unchecked power to alter and control cultures in Latin America. In doing so, it failed to identify the local dynamics, collaborative agents, and common interests that conditioned

² See for example: Schiller, *Communication and Cultural Domination*; Rita Atwood and Emile G. McAnany, *Communication and Latin American Society: Trends in Critical Research, 1960-1985* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986); Fejes, *Imperialism, Media, and the Good Neighbor*; Dorfman Mattelart, *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic*. For the case of radio in Colombia see especially Reynaldo Pareja, *Historia de la Radio en Colombia* (Bogotá: Servicio Colombiano de Comunicación Social, 1984).

the expanding US mass media presence in the region. Reducing foreign/local encounters to an uneven power relationship, scholarship never articulated the complexities that framed the early US mass media presence in the region and, as a result, overlooked many of the intricacies of Latin American-US cultural relations.

The Diplomat's New Tool: Mass Media Meets Diplomacy

Projecting Mutual Understanding

Mutual understanding, the general objective of US cultural diplomacy, faced a variety of obstacles in Latin America, but from the OIAA perspective two were the most serious. First, owing to the elite cultural affinity for Europe, many aspects of US culture were unknown in Latin America. Second, in the absence of knowledge, negative stereotypes of US society and culture flourished. In part a reaction to the long history of US intervention in region, such stereotypes were also built upon negative images of US culture and society in Hollywood films and other forms of commercial mass media. The OIAA was concerned about sensationalism over gangsters, violence and crime in the news stories provided by US wire services to Latin American newspapers. Additionally, it preferred that “flag pole sitters, polar bear bathers, and people who were utterly and completely publicity mad” were not featured as comic relief in cinema newsreels produced in the US for Latin American viewers.³ It especially wanted to eliminate Axis propaganda that circulated widely in pre-war Latin America, dwelt on US imperialism and reinforced other negative stereotypes via radio and print materials. The OIAA thus prioritized the elimination of negative images about US culture through its mass media programs.

³ Rowland, *History of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs*, p.74.

As the basic tenet of US cultural diplomacy, mutual understanding proved easily adaptable to a US-Latin American relationship in transition. As rhetoric and as practice, it could be interpreted and applied differently at the policy level within the context of good neighborliness, global economic crisis and international war. There were actually many variants of meaning in which diplomats, policy makers, and cultural managers could apply the tenet, but two strains were most in evidence. One framed mutual understanding in the vein of culture and emphasized education while the other framed it in politics and emphasized information or propaganda.

Reflecting professional educators' role in crafting cultural diplomacy, the first strain posited that nations would gain knowledge about, understanding of and respect for each other through cultural dialogue. Knowing each other was a learning process, so cultural encounters in the realm of education were especially valued. Reciprocity was the foundation of this strain, and American schools and BNCs were the most prominent diplomatic institutions developed under its influence. The second strain emphasized informational exchange rather than culture. Mutual understanding was still the general aim, but countering fascist propaganda was the more important, short-term goal. Priority was given to US policies and actions directly or indirectly related to the global conflict. Under the pressure of war this strain was proudly propagandist; in reaction to fascism, communism and perceived radicalism, it unapologetically argued the merits of US-led democratic capitalism as Latin America's best path to security and modernity.

As proponents of these strains competed and collaborated in policy formulation, mass media gave new form to foreign relations. Through radio, film, and print, governments developed the means to speak directly to foreign peoples around the world

and circumvent official diplomatic channels and layers of authority. Experimenting with this diplomatic modernity, US government mass media programs in Latin America reflected the tension between the cultural and political frames of mutual understanding. However, when the war erupted, the political strain gained the upper hand. Education and culture remained a focus of OIAA energies, but propaganda made ground during wartime. Ideological persuasion became central to US cultural diplomacy. After the war, Ben Cherrington, the first director of the Division of Cultural Relations of the Department of State, made the point: in the wartime program of cultural diplomacy, “the distinction between unilateral propaganda on the one hand and reciprocal cultural cooperation on the other hand, so clearly perceived and adhered to in the prewar years, became increasingly blurred.”⁴

Analyzing the projection of mutual understanding through mass media in this chapter, I rely on Philip Taylor’s distinctions between education and propaganda. Education is “imparting of information and ideas” that “enable the recipient to make up his or her own given mind on any subject.”⁵ In contrast, propaganda is...

*the deliberate attempt to persuade people to think and behave in a desired way...conscious, methodical, and planned decisions to employ techniques of persuasion designed to achieve specific goals that are intended to benefit those organizing the process.*⁶

As Taylor frames it, intent marks the difference between education and propaganda. This is a logical conclusion, and it is important to keep in mind as this chapter proceeds. I do not, however, want to overemphasize the original intent of propaganda in analyzing foreign/local encounters around mass media. To focus too much on policy-driven intent

⁴ Ben M. Cherrington, “Ten Years After,” *Association of American Colleges Bulletin* 34 (Dec. 1948), p. 5.

⁵ Philip M. Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Era* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 7.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6

distracts from analysis of audience where intent is often altered or lost in translation. In the Colombian case, local, regional, and national filters refashioned the original intent of OIAA mass media products; collaborators, like Monseñor Garzón and Father Caicedo, asserted their own intentions that conditioned the messages carried by the media. Given the wide range of local subjectivities that informed reception of the mass media products, focusing too narrowly on original intent overlooks many of the complexities of this type of foreign/local engagement. In historicizing mass media programs of the OIAA in Colombia, then, I am interested in the variety of intentions and range of reception accorded the mass media programs. Acknowledging both that variety and range complicates views of the Colombian-US relationship.

Transnational Convergence: Education and Mass Media

Modernization of national education was the goal of professional educators and politicians in both the US and Colombia in the 1930s and 1940s. They shared a basic faith in the power of education to transform society although specifics differed in each case. The educational focus of FDR's Pan Americanism, then, provided the point of convergence for transnational engagement in the field. Shared educational discourse and practice between Colombia and the US altered the historic transnational flow of educational resources and influences from Europe. Significantly, high levels of optimism characterized the discourse over instructional mass media in both the US and Colombia. In both countries mass media technology was associated with modernity and, thus, considered desirable for schools and classrooms.

Mass media was praised as an educational tool in the US during the 1930s. FDR, who used radio to promote his New Deal reforms and prepare the US public for the

European war, led a chorus of believers in the efficacy of mass media in formal and informal education; government efforts in radio and film, he believed, had educated the public “in the nation’s business” and in difficult times taught the US “to think as a nation.”⁷ In contemporary US educational journals, professional educators grappled with application of instructional mass media in diverse educational settings. Film received the widest consideration, and a range of organizations and enterprises --from the US Office of Education (an executive branch office) to small commercial film studios to professional educators’ organizations like the American Council on Education and the Women’s Section of the American Physical Education Association-- were engaged in aspects of educational film production.⁸

In Colombia, as the Ministry of National Education was searching for practical methods of educational expansion, interest in instructional applications of mass media increased steadily throughout the 1930s. Echoing FDR, politicians and educators within the ministry extolled the value of mass media as an educational tool. They expressed faith that it could be harnessed toward reducing illiteracy and neutralizing its consequences. And they too wanted to employ it to help their regionalized peoples think as a nation.⁹ To these ends, the ministry initiated educational programming via radio with a government broadcasting station in 1929. Experimentation with film followed. Projecting the sounds

⁷ FDR, “Address of the President Delivered by Radio from the White House” (Fireside Chat 10: On New Legislation), 12 October 1937, Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, <http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/speeches/detail/3311> [accessed 11 November 2009].

⁸ Indicative of growing professional interest in classroom applications of film, radio and other new media, educational journals from the mid-1930s forward were a forum for theories and practices of audio-visual instruction. See for example: S. Howard Evans, “Opportunities in Education by Radio,” *The Phi Delta Kappan* 21, no. 7 (Mar. 1939), pp. 298-299; Frederic M. Thrasher, “Education Versus Censorship,” *Journal of Educational Sociology* 13, no. 5 (Jan. 1940), pp. 285-306; James S. Kinder, “Visual Aids in Education,” *Review of Educational Research* 12, no. 3 (June 1942), pp. 336-344; Roy Wegner, “Motion Pictures in Teacher Education,” *Educational Research Bulletin* 22, no. 4 (Apr. 1943), pp. 90-96.

⁹ Jose Joaquín Castro M., MEN, *Educación Nacional – Informe al Congreso: 1938* (Bogotá: Editoria ABC, 1938), p. 60.

and images of national festivals and customs through both media, government ministers and bureaucrats hoped to instill an element of nationalism among Colombians, but budgetary constraints significantly limited the ministry's ability to turn potential into educational and cultural practice.¹⁰ High production costs and limited expertise led to the closing of the national radio station and more failures than successes in educational cinema.¹¹

Year after year, ministers lamented the opportunities lost by not widely employing mass media as official educational and cultural instruments. That commercial film and radio in Colombia were simultaneously experiencing substantial growth stood in sharp contrast to official government efforts. The ministers and their subordinates were frustrated that commercial media and not ministry programs seemed to be driving cultural transformation. In the commercial sphere, on silver screens, through radio receptors, and in glossy print images, Colombians found new channels for exploring and responding to their world, for challenging the status quo, and projecting alternatives to the dominant, elite culture that took inspiration from Europe. Importantly, an informational explosion was then underway, and through it the Colombian public experienced greater exposure to foreign cultures through news and entertainment media. With building tensions in Europe, the Old Continent remained a steady focus in evolving news coverage, but increasingly it was the news, entertainment and culture of the Americas, and especially the US, that found the larger mass media platform. That these foreign influences arrived directly into Colombian homes and communities, with no local filtering, was perceived as a threat in various social quarters. The Church railed against indecency in commercial

¹⁰ Gaitán, MEN, *La obra educativa del gobierno en 1940*, p. 53.

¹¹ MEN, *Memoria de Educación Nacional: 1939* (Bogotá: 1939), p. 75.

cinema. Hollywood films were a particular concern because many of the cultural traits they projected and/or glamorized violated Church-enforced social standards. Alarmed by projections of juvenile delinquency and sexuality in foreign-made police and detective dramas, some regional governments created censorship boards.¹² Even the Ministry of Foreign Relations voiced strong concern that international influences via film and radio “present dangers of changing the [nation’s] traditional nature with the imposition of a language, of a moral sensibility and of a foreign ideology.”¹³

Because commercial mass media introduced what some considered undesirable influences, a premium was placed on official government programs that could counteract them in some way. Though lacking the necessary resources, the Ministry of National Education remained convinced that instructional mass media would help overcome the educational deficits of the nation. It would also allow Liberal cultural managers to construct and project a new, more inclusive, and modern version of Colombianidad. Colombian-produced film and radio projects promoting education and projecting nationalism were the ideal, but in their absence the ministry proved very willing to consider foreign sources. Under these circumstances, the ministry relied on foreign-produced mass media to sustain its educational and cultural programs. With a temporary shutdown of European-Colombian educational exchange because of the war, the OIAA became a primary foreign source of cultural and educational mass media. Coordination committees throughout the nation facilitated distribution.

¹² “Decreto Número 636 de 1936,” Departamento de Cundinamarca, 14 Sep. 1936, in *Informe del Director de Educación Nacional al Señor Gobernador del Departamento*, Dirección de Educación Pública del Departamento del Atlántico (Barranquilla: 1939), pp. 180-181.

¹³ Luis López de Mesa, “Circular Sobre Difusión Cultural,” 24 Feb. 1941, AMRE, Sección Primera, “Correspondence con el Ministerio de Educación Nacional: 1940-41,” 705/92/52, AGN.

Implementation: Coordination Committees, Information and Propaganda

Coordination committees were a temporary, but innovative structure of the war. They were formed during the conflict and were disbanded with the peace. Nelson Rockefeller considered locally-residing US businessmen an invaluable resource for cultural diplomacy in Latin America, and he enlisted hundreds of them as volunteers in the largest urban centers of the region. To Rockefeller and the OIAA, these men constituted an untapped pool of talent who could assist in adjusting cultural programming for local conditions and serve as a “rapid check on effectiveness.”¹⁴ More than five dozen men served on coordination committees in Colombia during the war, and they brought important business knowledge and skills to the task; their extensive lists of business contacts were a valuable asset along with their understandings of local economies, experience in product marketing, and familiarity with local business customs. Yet, it was not simply for their business backgrounds that these volunteers were so highly regarded by the OIAA. Resident businessmen were grounded in local culture in ways that OIAA or embassy officials were not. They lived day-to-day immersed in the social and cultural rhythms of their adopted communities. Many were long-time residents of Colombia, some were raising children there, and others had married into local families. From a historical perspective, these volunteers cannot be reduced to agents of the US industries and corporations they represented. In their daily lives and in their work implementing OIAA programming, they were important transnational mediators of foreign/local encounters.

Coordination committee volunteers were strong advocates of BNCs and American schools. As seen in earlier chapters, they did much of the leg work in founding the first

¹⁴ Rowland, *History of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs*, pp. 245-260.

Centro Colombo-Americano and securing grants for the two existing American schools in Bogotá and Barranquilla. And though the committee had been dissolved by the time a second BNC and a third American school appeared in Medellín in 1946 and 1947, it had been instrumental in advocating and planning for these institutions during the war.

Coordination committees favored educational and cultural institutions as the best means for promoting long-term mutual understanding and eliminating negative stereotypes of the US among the upper and middle classes. The committees' main priority, however, was implementation of short-term mass media programs formulated in Washington. The committees were given wide latitude to adapt these programs to local conditions, but the tension between the cultural/educational and political/informational approaches to mutual understanding remained evident. While cultural and educational content was a staple of mass media programs throughout the war, OIAA intent with these programs was explicitly informational and less concerned with promoting dialogue through cultural exchange and reciprocity. Under the threat of war, Rockefeller believed informational programming was essential to maintaining hemispheric unity and mass media reached the widest possible audience. Free people, he told Congress, "can and will find the right answers to their defense and salvation --whatever the challenge-- if they are given the facts and an opportunity truthfully to understand and appreciate their mutual interest."¹⁵

The propaganda content of OIAA programs surged after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941. Coordination committees throughout Latin America were informed that "psychological warfare" had been elevated to priority status. While existing cultural programs would continue, the new emphasis was "placed hereafter on direct

¹⁵ Nelson Rockefeller, testimony, House Subcommittee on Deficiency Appropriations, *Second Deficiency Appropriation Bill for 1941 – HR 516*, 77th Cong., 1st sess., 17 June 1941, p. 688.

propaganda.”¹⁶ Following the US declarations of war on Japan and Germany, coordination committees in Colombia accepted their increased role in dissemination of propaganda, but they continually asked the OIAA to proceed with caution. Speaking for the regional committees throughout the country, the committee in Bogotá asked that war propaganda be “steady and carefully planned rather than rapid” because “in Colombia public opinion, the press, and the radio in general are eminently favorable to the cause of the United Nations.”¹⁷ It was the collective opinion of these volunteers that feelings of “common interest and sympathy for the United States” already existed among many influential sectors. While acknowledging that such sentiments might be intensified through propaganda, many on the committees were more comfortable with the narrower persuasive mission of only attempting “to influence those who oppose us or hesitate.”¹⁸ Importantly, this aversion to propaganda among the volunteer businessmen conditioned the way they implemented OIAA programs. In Washington, some OIAA officials criticized the Colombian coordination committee because it seemed “to be stronger on the cultural side than on the direct propaganda phase.”¹⁹

Throughout the war, each of the various regional committees also advised caution in their direct communications with the OIAA in Washington. As residents of Colombia, volunteer businessmen understood that anti-Yankee sentiment might easily be stoked with propaganda that locals deemed aggressive, crude, or insulting. Committee members advised that propaganda should be limited in volume and scope and that it should always

¹⁶ Heath Bowen to Robert Parrish, Monthly Report on Present Status of Projects and Requests for Colombia (COL-438), 15 June 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1377, F: Project Reports 1942-Feb. 1943.

¹⁷ David Richardson to Nelson Rockefeller, Monthly Report on Present Status of Projects and Requests for Colombia (COR-266), 15 July 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1377, F: Project Reports 1942-Feb. 1943.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Heath Bowman to David Richardson, Monthly Report on Present Status of Projects and Requests for Colombia (COR-591), 6 Aug. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1377, F: Project Reports 1942-Feb. 1943.

be tailored to local conditions. They were adamant, for example, that OIAA propaganda not paint all Germans with a Nazi brush; Germans were well regarded for their historic contributions to Colombian national development and failure to distinguish between Germans and Nazis in posters and print materials was “quite likely to boomerang.”²⁰ Additionally, as the war progressed, committees criticized the abundance of war related propaganda films sent to them and asked for more educational films.²¹ They refused materials that caricatured and homogenized Colombian or Latin American cultures, and they demanded that propaganda “should pay the people the compliment of being slightly subtle.”²² Well before global conflict ceased in either theater, they were emphatic that “outright propaganda” should be immediately replaced by cultural and educational programming at war’s end.²³

By the time the OIAA shifted emphasis toward direct propaganda, pro-Axis propaganda had already been circulating in Latin America for years. As Washington recognized the historic German cultural and educational presence in the region and tracked recent Nazi propaganda activities, its fears of Axis fifth columns became more acute. In the US, both the press and government were preoccupied with tracking such propaganda, and all were quick to grant it strong influence over politicians and public alike.²⁴ This high degree of sensationalism in US press reports and diplomatic analyses has been well documented, and it is also clear that Bogotá recognized it for what it was

²⁰ David Lindquist to David Kendall, 7 Sept. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín.

²¹ St. Clair Baumgartner to David Richardson, 3 Sept. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1361, F: Cartagena 1943.

²² Minutes of the Medellín Sub-Committee, 13 Nov. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín.

²³ Minutes of the Medellín Sub-Committee, 30 May 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín; Minutes of the 19th Meeting of the Barranquilla Sub-Committee, 1 Mar. 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1358, F: Barranquilla from January 1944.

²⁴ “German Propaganda in Colombia Seen as Winning Conservatives,” *NYT*, 17 Aug. 1940.

and attempted to temper it.²⁵ Still, Colombian officials were concerned enough about Nazi propaganda to monitor it actively themselves.

Before Bogotá cut diplomatic relations with Berlin, the daily press releases of the German legation were the primary source of overt Nazi propaganda in the capital and on the coast; later, anonymously printed materials replaced that official source. Colombian police investigators and officials of the Ministry of Foreign Relations gathered all circulating print materials, and they investigated distribution networks. On the Caribbean coast and in bordering regions, police showed particular concern for Berlin's shortwave radio broadcasting and clandestine radio networks.²⁶

In the pro-Axis and Nazi propaganda that circulated in Colombia from the late 1930s forward, the most common theme was justification of Nazi actions in Europe; such materials were infused with a high dose of Hitler idolatry.²⁷ Nazi respect for Catholicism was also a popular focus; playing to religious sentiment in the nation, Berlin touted its funding of church construction in Catholic Poland and alleged that British air strikes targeted Catholic cemeteries in Germany.²⁸ This propaganda also emphasized the long-

²⁵ On US press sensationalism over Nazi infiltration of Colombia see: Friedmann, *Nazis and Good Neighbors*, pp. 55-5; Bushnell, *Eduardo Santos and the Good Neighbor, 1938-1942*, p. 59. For the contemporary Colombian assessment of the situation see: Colombian Embassy/Washington to MRREE, 27 Nov. 1940, Actividades Nazi 1940-1942, "Actividades Nazi: 1940 Nov-Dic," 172/22/140, AMRE/DC, AGN.

²⁶ Dirección de la Policía /Barranquilla, Department of Investigación y Identificación to Director de la Policía Nacional, 13 Jan. 1942, Actividades Nazi 1940-1942, "Actividades Nazi: 1942 Enero," 176/22/1-12, AMRE/DC, AGN.

²⁷ Collections of pro-Nazi print propaganda in circulation before and during the war were collected by the National Police and the Ministry of Foreign Relations (MRREE). See MRREE, Actividades Nazi, "Propaganda Activities Nazi 1937-1940," 184/23/1-11, AMRE/DC, AGN. Interesting examples include: *El Alto Mando Aleman Comunica* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Patria, 1940); Fererico de Urrutia, *La Paz Que Quiere Hitler* (Madrid: Blass, 1939); *La Guerra en Polonia* (Madrid, 1946); *Causas de la Guerra: Antecedentes Politicos de la Guerra* (Madrid: Falange Espanol, 1939).

²⁸ Press Release -Legación de Alemania, Sección de Prensa - Bogotá, 8 June 1940, Actividades Nazi 1940-1942, "Actividades Nazi: 1940," 170/21/16, AMRE/DC, AGN. See also press release dated 8 Aug. 1940 in the same folder [170/21/29].

term economic benefits of the German-Colombian relationship.²⁹ Increasing and strong Nazi criticism of Pan Americanism as farce, as detrimental to Latin American sovereignty, and as a roadblock to modernity was also noted by Colombian diplomats.³⁰ Not all pro-Nazi propaganda, however, came from German sources. Booklets printed by Falange and other pro-fascist presses in Spain and Argentina were common among those gathered by local police investigators.

Pamphlets and broadsheets authored and printed by Colombian activists added to the volume of war-related propaganda then circulating. Some of these locally produced materials were overtly pro-Nazi and simply repeated official Nazi lines or articulated Nazi themes in local context. Colombian Jews, for example, were labeled true vampires [*verdaderos vampiros*] who sucked the blood of the people and destroyed commerce.³¹ Still, much of the locally produced propaganda was not of direct Nazi origin or sentiment. It was instead the product of fervent nationalists who advocated Colombian neutrality in the war. The US press and diplomatic bureaucracy usually saw this local propaganda as decidedly sympathetic to Hitler, but such a simple interpretation ignored local history and the complex relationships Colombia had with both Germany and the US. Reminding Colombians of Germany's contributions to national development --"its sons made the Magdalena navigable...they gave us the best organized airline in the world...they fought at our side against Peru" --was a common persuasive tactic of this pro-neutrality

²⁹ *Datos Significativos Sobre Comercio Colombo-Aleman* (Bogotá, 1940), Actividades Nazi 1940-1942, "Actividades Nazi: 1940 Agosto-Septiembre," 170/21/90, AMRE/DC, AGN.

³⁰ Santiago López to MRREE, Nov. 1941, "Legación of Colombia en Alemania – Berlin: 1941-42," 20/03/135, AMRE/DC, AGN.

³¹ Joaquín Posada, "Alerta Pueblo Bumangués!!" undated, Actividades Nazi 1940-1942, "Actividades Nazi: 1940 Nov-Dic," 172/22/31, AMRE/DC, AGN.

propaganda.³² Another nationalist approach was rejecting a wartime alliance with the US as a threat to national sovereignty:

*The Yankee Fifth Column is numerous, it is everywhere and it is energized by something more effective than anything used by Hitler: the dollar. With this tool it has gone about equipping an army of mercenaries, politicians, journalists and lawyers who have been playing a sinister role in Colombian history since the memorable theft of the Isthmus of Panama. For this reason we affirm: it is right to fight against the Nazi Fifth Column; but at the same time we must fight against all the Fifth Columns, especially against Yankee Imperialism and its wretched agents, the national traitors.*³³

As the European war shifted into a new phase after Pearl Harbor, OIAA-produced mass media continued to extol Pan Americanism as Latin America's best path to security and modernity. However, given the OIAA objective of combating Nazi propaganda (or what Rockefeller called "imperialism of ideas"), mass media programming now carried more specific anti-German, anti-Nazi, and anti-fascist as well as pro-Allied, pro-US, and pro-democratic intent.³⁴

Print Media: Press and Publications

With more than 200 hundred staffers, the Press and Publications Section of the OIAA in Washington produced much of the print propaganda the US circulated in Latin America during the war. News and feature articles were written for placement in Latin American publications; magazines, newsletters, posters, pamphlets, photography and

³² "...sus hijos hicieron navegable el Magdalena...nos dieron la empresa aérea mejor organizada del mundo...lucharon a nuestro lado con el Perú!" Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario, undated press release, Actividades Nazi 1940-1942, "Actividades Nazi: 1940 Nov-Dic," 172/22/318, AMRE/DC, AGN.

³³ "La Quinta Columna Yanqui es numerosa, esta en todas partes y cuenta con un arma más eficaz que todas las de Hitler: el dolar. Con esta arma ha venido tradicionalmente equipando un vasto ejército de mercenarios, de políticos, periodistas y abogados, estan jugando un siniestro papel en la historia colombiana, desde el memorable hurto de Istmo de Panamá. Por eso afirmamos: esta muy bien la lucha contra la Quinta Columna nazi, pero luchando también al mismo tiempo contra todas la Quintas Columnas, especialmente contra la de imperialismo Yanqui y sus miseables agentes, los traidones nacionales." Gilberto Vieira, "Contra Todas Las Quinta Columnas," undated, Actividades Nazi 1940-1942, "Actividades Nazi: 1940 Nov-Dic," 172/22/323, AMRE/DC, AGN.

³⁴ Rockefeller, testimony, *HR516*, 17 June 1941, p. 683.

cartoons were produced in-house or gathered for distribution.³⁵ Initially, the coordination committees distributed these print materials directly in their regions, but as information and propaganda gained importance in US cultural diplomacy this work placed untenable time burdens on the volunteers. In response, the OIAA established press offices in national capitals to assist the regional committees and facilitate smooth expansion of their work. In Bogotá, the section grew significantly across the war years and eventually employed more than three dozen bilingual secretaries, stenographers, office boys, projectionists, script writers, and assistants. Overseen by an OIAA representative, the director of information, almost all of these paid staffers were Colombian citizens, and they worked out of offices in central Bogotá that were removed from the US embassy.³⁶

From the start, embassy officials in Colombia were uncomfortable with the concept of a separate press office. In part, this discomfort grew from State Department resentment of the OIAA; Rockefeller's office encroached on the department's turf and established new diplomatic channels outside the traditional sphere of Foreign Service. Emphasizing direct communication with Colombians through mass media, the OIAA challenged the embassy's control over diplomacy. More immediately, however, it was the embassy's assessment of the Colombian press --as largely supportive of US wartime objectives-- that made it nervous about OIAA propaganda and information activities. To the extent possible, the ambassador imposed restrictions on the OIAA and specifically barred aggressive activities he associated with a contemporary British propaganda

³⁵ Rowland, *History of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs*, pp. 41-56.

³⁶ Forney Rankin, "Brief Report on CI-AA in Colombia," 5 Jan. 1945, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1378, F: Reports 1945.

campaign.³⁷ While welcoming the administrative support, volunteers on regional committees continued to value cultural engagement over propaganda. They accepted a role in supplying information to editorial writers, for example, but argued that it was best to secure column lineage in local newsprint through public ceremonies, educational activities, flag presentations, and reciprocal cultural engagement.³⁸

The news staff of the OIAA in Washington included reporters, writers and editors who covered wartime events in Washington and Europe. Special coverage was devoted to events that held particular appeal for Latin American newspapers like Pan American conferences and visits of the region's heads of state to the US. The role of the Brazilian Expeditionary Force, the only Latin American military contingent fighting with the Allies in Europe, was heavily covered. Because timeliness is crucial in reporting, OIAA news articles were sent directly, in Spanish or Portuguese, to newspaper offices throughout the hemisphere. In Colombia, the OIAA press section found that 90% of the articles sent were published somewhere in country. Bogotá was the exception to OIAA success with news article placement. There, competition among daily newspapers was particularly strong and staff writers more plentiful, so few OIAA news articles appeared.³⁹ Medellín was the opposite. There OIAA articles were in popular demand as long as they had not previously appeared in any other newspaper. The principal daily of that city, the Conservative-affiliated *El Colombiano*, for example, would not print articles if they had appeared in Bogotá's Liberal *El Tiempo* or any other papers the day before.⁴⁰

³⁷ Forney Rankin, "Narrative Report on Press Operations in Colombia," July 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1377, F: Reports, March 1942 to September 1944.

³⁸ Richardson to Rockefeller, Monthly Report, 15 July 1942.

³⁹ Rankin, "Narrative Report on Press Operations in Colombia."

⁴⁰ David Lindquist to David Richardson, 14 Nov. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B136, F: Colombian American Center.

In distributing news articles, a key OIAA concern was avoiding competition with US wire services operating in the region. The Associated Press (AP), United Press (UP), and International News Service (INS) had over 200 customers throughout Latin America, and where the local newspapers used these services, the OIAA made no effort to place its news articles. Though the OIAA could be critical of wire service coverage, it was more concerned with getting news from a US perspective into the region's press than getting its own articles printed. Indeed, cognizant that its mandate would likely end with the war, the OIAA helped to negotiate reduced wire service rates for newspapers in areas where US news perspective was absent; in effect, it expanded the customer bases of the AP, UP, and INS. In Colombia, where newspapers showed a preference for European wire services, an OIAA priority was filling news columns formerly supplied by Transocean, the German wire service, with either its own or US wire service articles. Additionally, the OIAA was interested in establishing a US presence in smaller press markets where subscriptions to British Reuters or French Havas wire services were common.⁴¹

In contrast to time-sensitive and battle-focused news articles, feature stories produced in Washington focused on US culture and Pan American themes. The OIAA used these articles as a vehicle for combating persistent negative stereotypes about and lack of knowledge of the US. More than 1,200 publications in Latin America printed these feature stories during the war. In addition to daily newspapers, features appeared in monthly journals, magazines and newsletters covering economic, political, and cultural topics. Labor and education publications were especially targeted by this OIAA service.⁴²

⁴¹ OIAA/Bogotá, "General Report on Newspapers in Colombia," 1941, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1377, File: Reports, March 1942 to September 1944; Rowland, *History of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs*, pp. 41-56.

⁴² Rowland, *History of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs*, pp. 51-53.

Feature stories were distributed through the OIAA press sections in each country with the assistance of the various coordination committees. In Colombia, getting features articles accepted proved difficult unless exclusive publishing rights were granted and articles were rewritten by Colombian staffers of the Bogotá press office. Once local context was added, Spanish vocabulary was regionalized, and guarantees of exclusivity ensured, articles were more readily accepted. While many feature articles appeared without attribution, it was not uncommon for newspapers and magazines to acknowledge the OIAA as the source.⁴³ At least thirty-two Colombian publications regularly printed these feature stories although OIAA representatives reported little success with labor publications because, in their opinion, unions were “in the main Communist-controlled.”⁴⁴ In addition to articles authored by the OIAA in Washington, feature articles were also made available by US magazines for translation and reprint.⁴⁵

During the war, newsprint was rationed and this placed a premium on column space in Latin American newspapers. Almost all of the US and Latin American supply came from Canada, but it was distributed through US firms. Wartime restrictions on shipping forced rationing throughout the hemisphere, and at the start of the war, the United States was briefly in a position to deny newsprint export licenses to individual Latin American newspapers that it deemed pro-Axis or at least anti-Allied. In the case of Colombia, Washington used this tactic only once against a Conservative newspaper, *El Siglo*. Soon after, however, a newsprint allocation agreement was worked out with governments throughout the hemisphere, and each nation divided its share of newsprint

⁴³ Rankin, “CI-AA Statistical Report.”

⁴⁴ Rankin, “Narrative Report on Press Operations in Colombia.”

⁴⁵ Ibid.

as it saw fit.⁴⁶ Thus, as far as restricted newsprint was concerned, Washington maintained little leverage to encourage editors to carry OIAA articles. Indeed, under the new allocation system, it was in Washington's best interest to increase newsprint supply so that editors could if they chose devote additional column space to Allied and Pan American news.⁴⁷

The US did have greater leverage with newspapers in advertising. Though wartime importation restrictions and priority transport schedules prevented them from maintaining adequate sales stock, many US businesses continued to advertise in Latin American newspapers during the war. Looking toward the post-war years with the hopes of expanding market share, these businesses chose to promote their products even though they were often unavailable to the public. Reporting that 44% of all advertising space in Latin American newspapers was from US businesses, Rockefeller considered such advertisement "good-will copy" and was keenly aware of Latin American dependence upon it.⁴⁸ In Colombia, the loss of significant US advertising by Bogotá's conservative *El Siglo* forced a clear change in its editorial positions --from criticism of US-led Pan Americanism and Bogotá's alliance with Washington to support for the United States and the efforts of the Allies. While the paper's loss of advertising was not orchestrated by representatives of the US government, the perception that it could intervene was enough to set editorial reversals in motion in the hope of stopping the loss.⁴⁹ For other newspapers, a greater concern was being black listed or added to the Proclaimed List of Certain Blocked Nationals. First published in Washington in July 1941, the list identified

⁴⁶ Bushnell, *Eduardo Santos and the Good Neighbor*, pp. 46-48.

⁴⁷ "Latin America Hit by Paper Shortage," *NYT*, 14 Apr. 1944.

⁴⁸ "Advertising News and Notes," *NYT*, 29 Oct. 1943.

⁴⁹ Bushnell, *Eduardo Santos and the Good Neighbor*, pp. 46-48.

alleged Axis agents, enterprises and sympathizers with whom US businesses and individuals were barred from dealing. Colombian enterprises and individuals figured prominently on the initial list; Colombia had more listees than any other Latin American country except for Argentina and Brazil, which had significantly larger German immigrant populations.⁵⁰ Washington's propensity for finding Nazis in Colombia certainly gave editors pause as they articulated editorial positions and considered column space for OIAA news and feature articles.

A rush to identify and label allies and enemies is common in times of war, but the process is frequently imprecise. Lacking local perspective, the State Department and the OIAA were quick to misread content in the Colombian press. The case of *El Colombiano* in Medellín is illustrative. A partisan Conservative newspaper in a conservative Catholic city, *El Colombiano* editors were at times labeled pro-Nazi by the State Department and the OIAA. They were not, and such a label was sustained only by US ignorance of Colombian politics, culture, and economics. *El Colombiano*'s attacks on the national Liberal administration and its alliance with the United States was evidence of deeply partisan politics and lingering resentment of US imperialism but not Nazi sympathies. Intense anticommunism in Catholic Medellín infused *El Colombiano*'s commentaries on the US alliance with Russia, but it was not anti-Allied.⁵¹ And when coffee rationing was instituted in the US, strong criticism of the policy in *El Colombiano* grew not from the influence of a Nazi fifth column but from the potentially devastating economic impact of the policy. As the local coordination committee rushed to explain to the OIAA, news of the rationing of one cup per day for Americans had "engendered considerable ill feeling"

⁵⁰ *The Proclaimed List of Certain Blocked Nationals: Promulgated Pursuant to the Proclamation of July 17, 1941* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1941).

⁵¹ Lindquist to Richardson, 14 Nov. 1942.

in the press because “anything that affects coffee affects everyone in Colombia.” The committee in Medellín was especially alarmed by articles circulated through the AP that detailed how coffee substitutes were growing in popularity in the US. It asked the OIAA to produce and distribute feature articles quickly stressing that “the love of coffee is ingrained in the American public” and would never dissipate.⁵²

While OIAA article placement in the largest and most influential Colombian newspapers and magazines often required marketing efforts by the Bogotá press section or the regional coordination committees, placements in smaller publications were more easily achieved. Indeed, many low circulation newspapers and magazines made daily requests for material at the OIAA offices throughout the country. Many of these publications had been established only recently, explicitly professed anti-Nazi sentiments, and accepted OIAA materials without condition. Others, however, were struggling financially and expected economic support in exchange for article acceptance.⁵³ In Medellín, the publisher of *Temas*, a monthly magazine, had heard that local committee was offering to assist “publications with a democratic orientation that do not have great financial resources.” He asked that his magazine receive articles and financial support because it was “loyal to the democratic cause.”⁵⁴ Similarly, in Barranquilla, Sr. Alirio Bernal repeatedly asked for propaganda and monetary aid for his magazine, *Acción Democrática* [Democratic Action].⁵⁵ OIAA policy prohibited direct

⁵² P. L. Collins to OIAA/Washington, “The Desirability of Counteracting the Unfavorable Impression Created in Colombia By the Recent Order Rationing Coffee in the United States,” 1 Dec. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín.

⁵³ Rankin, “Narrative Report on Press Operations in Colombia.”

⁵⁴ Eduardo Rendon to Mr. Caney, 12 Oct. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín.

⁵⁵ Forney Rankin to Karl C. Parrish, 10 Oct. 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1358, F: Barranquilla from January 1944.

financial subsidies to these and other publications and only news and feature articles were offered to them.

When it came to the Catholic publications, however, the OIAA was willing to bend its policy and offer direct financial assistance because some factions within the Church decidedly resisted US leadership and influence. Supportive of Spain's fascist regime for its commitment to a Catholic nationalism, some prominent Catholics loudly argued for a rejection of Pan Americanism in favor of Hispanidad. Many resented the growing presence of US Protestant missionaries in the nation. Others could not see past the US alliance with "godless" communist Russia. Thus, the OIAA actively pursued their own alliances with the Colombian Catholic Church --its hierarchy, clergy, and faithful-- to counter existing resistance. It made small cash donations to assist anti-Nazi Catholic newspapers, and it published pamphlets by prominent Colombian Catholics who recognized a common, anti-Nazi interest with the US. In exchange, Colombian clergy provided the OIAA with mailings lists of influential Catholics and enthusiastically agreed to distribute Spanish-language publications authored by US Catholics. Thus, for example, Colombian bishops distributed materials of the National Catholic Welfare Conference (US), such as *La Guerra Nacista Contra la Iglesia Católica* [The Nazi War Against the Catholic Church], to clergy throughout the nation.⁵⁶

Purely Catholic themes accounted for a small but important percentage of the fifteen million pamphlets financed and distributed by the OIAA in Latin America during

⁵⁶ Coordination Committee for Colombia/Bogotá, Revolving Fund Account – Monthly Report, Mar. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Accounts (FO-F-A)December 1941- July 31, 1942; National Catholic Welfare Conference, *La Guerra Nacista Contra la Iglesia Católica* (Washington: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1942); Edwin Sours to Harold Colvocoresses, 29 April 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Barranquilla, 1943; Rankin, "Narrative Report on Press Operations in Colombia."

the war.⁵⁷ Many of the pamphlets were printed in Washington, but others were developed locally. In Colombia, war-themed propaganda pamphlets stressed Allied strength, the need for hemispheric unity, and the value of democracy while highlighting German atrocities. Coordination committees found high demand for such material; local schools were resource poor and proved especially eager to gather OIAA pamphlets to use in the classroom.⁵⁸ The committees also made pamphlets with education-specific content --most frequently the products of the American Council on Education, the National Education Association, and the Pan American Union-- available to schools and libraries. Pamphlets on broader cultural topics, from reviews of contemporary North American literature to explanations of Boy Scouting, were also widely disseminated by the committees in Colombia.⁵⁹

The most high-profile OIAA publication for Latin America was a defense-themed magazine titled *En Guardia* [On Guard]. The target audience of the magazine was Latin America's literate upper class, who the OIAA sought to convince of the US ability to defend the hemisphere. Printed monthly in Spanish and Portuguese (quarterly in French for Haiti), each issue contained fifty pages and was filled with photographs of military equipment and engagements. High quality printing and use of color made it an impressive publication, and it was very popular. Based on demand, over 500,000 copies were distributed per issue by 1945.⁶⁰ In Bogotá, hundreds of people visited the OIAA offices

⁵⁷ Rowland, *History of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs*, pp. 54-55.

⁵⁸ Rankin, "Narrative Report on Press Operations in Colombia"; Hno. Hildeberto (Sociedad de Ciencias Naturales de Colegio "Biffi") to Sr. Secretario del la Junta de Coordinación de Asuntos Interamericanos, 17 Apr. 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1358, F: Barranquilla from January 1944; Forney Rankin to Karl C. Parrish, 28 Aug. 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1358, F: Barranquilla from January 1944; David Lindquist to Harold Colvocoresses, 8 Apr. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1378, F: Reports 1945.

⁵⁹ Harold Colvocoresses to Edwin Sours, 25 June 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Barranquilla, 1943; *El Scout: Revista Oficial de los Boy Scouts de Colombia* 11, no. 5 (January 1942).

⁶⁰ Rowland, *History of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs*, pp. 46-48.

each month to collect a free copy, and regional coordination committees distributed hundreds more to influential government, business, and cultural leaders.⁶¹ Another widely circulated OIAA magazine was the *American Newsletter*, which detailed the extensive Pan American cultural activities organized by the OIAA in the US.

Additionally, it was common for coordination committees to donate subscriptions to commercial magazines such as *Life*, *National Geographic*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, and *Popular Mechanics* upon request by schools and libraries.⁶²

While newspaper articles, pamphlets, and magazines targeted those who were literate, OIAA posters, cartoons and photography targeted broader audiences. Posters were most commonly cartoon or photographic style, and they used few or no words to present Pan American themes and anti-Axis ideas. Designed for display in public spaces, posters were also reported to be commonly used as wall decorations in homes in poorer urban and rural areas. In rural Colombia, US businessmen distributed posters as they traveled their sales and service routes.⁶³ Coordination committees handled poster distribution in urban areas but often found they created more problems than they were worth. Committees often rejected posters as inappropriate for their locales and refused to distribute them. Modern graphics were confusing, generic representation of Latin America were insulting, and those hung in easily accessible public spaces tended to get marked up by vandals. The Medellín committee reported that one poster had even caused a “cantina disturbance.” The poster at the center of the bar fight was cartoon style and showed Allied flags imprisoning Hitler and Japanese Emperor Hirohito; the Colombian flag was not included in the design and this omission (and alcohol) fueled an aggressive

⁶¹ Rankin, “Narrative Report on Press Operations in Colombia.”

⁶² Frederick Stimson to Natalie Henry, 3 Aug. 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín.

⁶³ Rankin, “Narrative Report on Press Operations in Colombia.”

flare of nationalism.⁶⁴ Posters aside, OIAA cartoon propaganda took a variety of other forms. Political cartoons and cartoon strips were sent directly to newspapers but infrequently used because humor did not always translate. Cartoon booklets that explained Pan American unity, detailed Nazi atrocities, or chronicled key battles and personalities of the war in pictures were popular in rural areas where literacy rates were low. Finally, approximately 25,000 photographs were distributed monthly by the OIAA in Latin America. Drawn from US news syndicates and the military, photographs were sent directly to newspapers and magazines or converted into posters. In Colombia, the OIAA press office noted that photos sent to newspapers and magazines were almost always used. Many of the publications credited the OIAA or US news syndicates as the source of the photos, but doing so was not a requirement of use.⁶⁵

Radio Broadcasting

Radio broadcasting in Colombia was still a novelty when the war broke out, and OIAA programs actively used this developing media to reach literate and illiterate Colombians alike. Broadcasting had begun in the nation as public enterprise with a government channel in 1929, when it was introduced with fanfare in the last days of the Conservative hegemony. The national station was enthusiastically adopted by Liberals with their ascension in 1930, and contemporary Liberal rhetoric privileged the new medium as an important educational and cultural tool that could clear a path to modernity. In the words of Daniel Samper Ortega, who was an early director of the station, radio was “as important as that of the schools and universities in the cultural development of the country” because it could reach “the working-classes who have

⁶⁴ Frederick Stimson to Forney Rankin, 8 Sept. 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín.

⁶⁵ Rankin, “Narrative Report on Press Operations in Colombia.”

neither money nor time” for formal education.⁶⁶ Such ambitious and lofty goals did not sustain. The station lacked resources, technical expertise and programming, and in 1938 it went off the air. In contrast, the commercial radio sector grew significantly. By 1934 there were seventeen commercial stations in the nation; the number had more than doubled to forty-four by 1939, and there were seventy by 1941; by the end of the war in 1945, there were ninety-three. The majority were located in the urban centers.⁶⁷ The OIAA tapped into this rapidly developing industry to reach a wide Colombian audience with its campaign for hemispheric unity. Built within the local context and structured upon common interests, Colombian-US collaboration through radio fostered transnational cultural connections that informed the wider binational relationship.

Colombia’s established newspaper industry resisted rise of radio. Indicative of contemporary challenges to elite hegemony, many of the emerging stations were owned and operated by members of the middle class.⁶⁸ Because programming was often designed to attract middle and lower-class audiences, the elite press accused the new media of promoting low level culture. In reality, newspaper owners’ cultural concerns had as much to do with the new competition they faced for advertising revenue as it did with lowering of cultural standards. Like the print media, many of the new radio stations were affiliated with one of the two political parties while others were entirely sponsored by a business or product brand. Still, with so much growth in the industry, competition

⁶⁶ “...las estaciones radiodifusoras pueden desempeñar en el desarrollo de la cultura del país un papel tan importante como el de los colegios y universidades; y acaso más ameno que el de éstos, especialmente en las clases trabajadoras que no disponen de dinero ni de tiempo para asistir a los establecimientos de educación, oficiales o particulares...” As quoted in Vincente Stamato, “Días de Radio,” *Revista Credencial Historia* 186 (June 2005).

<http://www.lablaa.org/blaavirtual/revistas/credencial/junio2005/radio.htm> [accessed on 12 Dec. 2009].

⁶⁷ Stamato, “Días de Radio.” See also: Hernando Telléz, *Cincuenta Anos de Radiodifusion en Colombia* (Medellín: Editorial Bedout, 1974).

⁶⁸ Wade, *Music, Race, & Nation*, p. 91. See also Pareja, *Historia de la Radio en Colombia*; Telléz, *Cincuenta Anos de Radiodifusion en Colombia*.

for listeners and sponsors remained intense. To attract both, stations offered a diverse line of programming including radionovelas (soap operas), radio theater, musical shows, and news commentary. Based on foreign models from elsewhere in Latin America and the US, contests testing trivia and music knowledge were exceptionally popular by the late 1930s.⁶⁹ With the onset of war and a decline in imported products, advertising revenues suffered and stations had to rely more on advertising from national firms. There was resulting turnover in the industry, but the continued and rapid increases in the number of stations reflected the overall industry success in finding commercial sponsorship.⁷⁰

With its expanding networks and listener base, radio began to offer Colombians across regions a variety of unifying cultural experiences. Though not in the officially controlled way government cultural managers had envisioned, the medium began to support a national reconsideration of what it meant to be Colombian. Importantly in this cultural process, radio listenership was not limited to those who could afford a receiving device. The costs of radio receivers certainly priced the majority of Colombians out of ownership, but costs rapidly spiraled downward as the industry grew and equipment became affordable for the growing middle classes. Further, in these early days, radio listening was not solely a private activity for the home. It was also a public activity that took place in a variety of venues. Radio speakers were regularly installed in cinemas, schools, and transit stations and on many a plaza, in large cities and small towns, residents could freely gather to listen to popular programs or special broadcasts.⁷¹ In those same public locations or in the privacy of their own homes, Colombians could also tune in to shortwave radio signals that carried government propaganda and cultural

⁶⁹ Pareja, *Historia de la Radio en Colombia*, pp. 43-4.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 177

⁷¹ Stamato, "Dias de Radio."

programming in Spanish from the national capitals of Europe, Russia, and Japan.⁷² Some commercial programming was also received from points in the US.

Given the dynamism of these new media in Colombia and throughout the hemisphere, the work of the OIAA Radio Division was extensive during the war, and the division's budget far exceeded any other sector within the agency. In Colombia, the press office worked in some capacity with each of the commercial stations that existed by war's end. Based on radio surveys it conducted in each region of the country, the office provided coordination committees with detailed reports on the radio station preferences of upper, middle, and lower-income families. Committees could use the data to target listeners in specific class categories as they arranged for local airings of OIAA programs.⁷³ In general, the OIAA either received free airtime or paid low rates for prime evening hours for its programs.

Wherever possible, the OIAA encouraged local production of its radio shows. Scripts were provided from Washington for the coordination committees to offer to local producers and stations. While the OIAA cultivated a pool of Latin American radio talent in its New York and Washington studios, it prized the credibility garnered when local voices, accents, and contexts anchored its programs.⁷⁴ Transcriptions, or pre-recorded programs on discs or tape, however, were more easily accepted by Colombian stations because they were ready to air. More often in the vein of entertainment and/or propaganda than education and culture, transcribed programs included melodramatic plays, mysteries, and detective series grounded directly in war themes. *Mr. V*, a counter-espionage drama, and *Dear Adolph*, a series of letters written to Hitler read in dramatic

⁷² Forney Rankin, "CI-AA in Colombia," 8 Mar. 1945, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1378, F: Reports 1945.

⁷³ David Richardson to Myron Reed, 19 Aug. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Barranquilla, 1942.

⁷⁴ Rankin, "Brief Report on CI-AA in Colombia."

character, were typical fare. More general cultural programs included adaptations of the world's great plays (from the Allied nations) and cowboy song sessions interspersed with narration. Most of these programs had originally aired in English on US radio stations.⁷⁵ Through coordination committees, the OIAA urged US and Colombian businesses to sponsor these programs, and the press section in Bogotá worked with local advertisers to plan radio campaigns around shows. The net effect over the course of the war was increased commercial sponsorship of OIAA programs in Colombia.⁷⁶ Indeed, in the last two years of the war, at least sixteen Colombian and US firms became the sole sponsors of various OIAA radio programs on local stations.⁷⁷

Another method of gaining local airtime for OIAA programs was through network affiliations. Both NBC and CBS collaborated extensively with the OIAA, and between them produced many of the OIAA transcriptions sent to Latin America. In addition, both also produced most of the OIAA material aired from the US via shortwave. The two networks had affiliations with a dozen Colombian stations and over 200 stations across Latin America.⁷⁸ Local affiliates carried regular, often nightly, hours of network programming relayed via shortwave for broadcast. Coordination committees always had multiple transcriptions available for these affiliates whenever relays failed --as they commonly did.⁷⁹

News delivery was another important aspect of OIAA radio programming, and a primary goal was connecting Latin American stations with US sources of news. Just as the OIAA promoted US wire services for print media, it did the same among radio

⁷⁵ Don Francisco to Robert Parrish, 28 Aug. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Barranquilla, 1942.

⁷⁶ Minutes of the 12th Regular Meeting of the Barranquilla Regional Committee, 8 Nov. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1358, F: Barranquilla, 1943.

⁷⁷ Rankin, "Brief Report on CI-AA in Colombia."

⁷⁸ Rankin, "CI-AA in Colombia."

⁷⁹ David Richardson to Myron Reed, 26 Sept. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Barranquilla, 1942.

stations. In encouraging local stations to affiliate with NBC or CBS, it sought to further extend US news perspective on the airwaves.⁸⁰ Additionally, coordination committees hired well known Colombian and Latin American journalists with pro-Allied sentiments as news commentators and bought them prime airtime on local radio.⁸¹ Common political interests often framed these relationships. In Barranquilla, Sr. Pérez Domenech was hired as a news commentator by the local committee. A Spaniard who had fled the Franco regime, Domenech was strongly anti-Falangista and anti-fascist. He had approached the coordination committee for funding of a new pro-allied commentary on radio and when they found him ideologically compatible they quickly hired him.⁸² His news commentary, which aired three times a week for an hour, included three distinct programs. On Tuesdays *El Arsenal de las Democracias* [The Arsenal of Democracies] aired, emphasizing the “material and moral resources of the US” for defeating Hitler; Thursday’s commentary was called *El Momento Interamericano* [The Inter-American Moment] and focused on Inter-American cooperation; finally, his Sunday program, *La Semana Bélica* [The Week at War], reviewed and analyzed war developments from the week past.⁸³ Similarly, in Medellín, the committee hired a popular commentator, Hernando Téllez, to present war news and to encourage pro-Allied solidarity. With a growing audience, the show soon attracted the interest of local commercial sponsors; a local hosiery mill, whose owners professed strong support for the US and the Allies, soon took over as the sole advertiser. In effect, the Colombian business bought the program

⁸⁰ Francisco to Parrish, 28 Aug. 1942.

⁸¹ Jose Joaquín Jimenez to Harold Colvocoresses, 29 Nov. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1362, F: Bogotá Correspondence; Advertisement, “Alejandro Sux Habla,” *La Prensa* (Barranquilla), 31 Oct. 1942.

⁸² Minutes of the 11th Regular Meeting of the Barranquilla Regional Committee, 18 Oct. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Barranquilla, 1943.

⁸³ Forney Rankin to Nelson Rockefeller, 28 Aug, 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1358, F: Barranquilla from January 1944.

from the OIAA. Under the arrangement, the business allowed Téllez to retain complete editorial freedom over the program.⁸⁴

While hiring commentators and paying for time on radio stations was common OIAA practice, providing direct support to maintain radio stations was not. Alfonso Arboleda operated a radio station in Barranquilla that was popular with the middle and lower classes. Strongly anti-Axis, he began one radio broadcast with a diatribe against the Nazis and a call to boycott all blacklisted firms (or those on the US Proclaimed List of Certain Blocked Nationals). Owing to a high concentration of German and Italian immigrant business owners on the coast, he soon lost two-thirds of his sponsors. Investigation by a member of Barranquilla's coordination committee, a US citizen of German ancestry, noted "threats of violence and two offers from Nazis to subsidize him sufficiently if he would stop his attacks."⁸⁵ Arboleda refused such offers and turned to the OIAA and the embassy for assistance. He asked that they use their influence to get US advertisers to pick up the sponsorship he had lost. The embassy was nervous about taking such direct action to support the station, so the local committee privately took up a collection from Americans in the city and made a donation with no official connection to the US government.⁸⁶ The collection was not enough to sustain the anti-Axis station, and Arboleda was soon off the air.

Though war-related information and propaganda content dominated the overall OIAA radio program, educational and cultural programming continued to be developed and aired. Colombia's national radio station, which had been reestablished by cultural

⁸⁴ David Lindquist to David Richardson, 30 Jan. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín; Forney Rankin to David Richardson, 12 Feb. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369.

⁸⁵ Robert Wesselhoeft to Coordination Committee/Barranquilla, 25 Aug. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Barranquilla, 1942.

⁸⁶ Myron Reed to David Richardson, 11 Sept. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Barranquilla, 1942.

managers within the Ministry of National Education in 1940, frequently aired OIAA programs. The new public station, Radiodifusora Nacional, maintained a vigorous campaign of educational and cultural diffusion throughout the war years. Its directors actively sought collaboration with schools, universities, and cultural organizations, and in the first year the station offered courses in Colombian literature, national and international music, world literature, poetry, history, theater, and film. It presented various types of news reports as well.⁸⁷ Over the 1940s, the station was joined in its selective cultural and educational mission by emerging university radio stations in Bogotá and Medellín.⁸⁸

Many OIAA radio programs fit within the educational and cultural mission of Radiodifusora Nacional and were enthusiastically accepted for airing. Station managers granted OIAA programs prime-time evening hours free of charge. In 1943, for example, OIAA programs accumulated 124 of “the best listening hours” with additional hours granted for special event broadcasts. By 1944, total OIAA hours on Radiodifusora Nacional increased to 324. Most programs were weekly half-hour presentations and focused broadly on cultural aspects of Pan Americanism; such shows as *Tierras de Libertad* [Lands of Liberty], *Radioteatro de America* [American Radio Theater], and *Cuentos de America* [American Stories] promoted hemispheric unity by exploring the peoples and cultures of the Americas. And on many occasions, Radiodifusora Nacional cleared program schedules for special OIAA event broadcasts such as live addresses by FDR and other prominent Pan Americanists.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Stamato, “Dias de Radio.”

⁸⁸ Minutes of the Medellín Sub-Committee, 23 Dec. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín.

⁸⁹ Forney Rankin, “Colombian Cooperation with the Coordination Committee for Colombia,” 31 Jan. 1945, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1378, Folder: Reports 1945.

Radio collaboration between the OIAA and the Ministry of National Education also resulted in the development and distribution of educational resources for Colombian classrooms. To accompany *Grandes Hombres de las Americas* [Great Men of the Americas], a series of eighteen radio dramas celebrating historical figures from the US and Latin American (in which Colombians figured prominently), the OIAA published a companion booklet. The ministry found the series useful for schools and its adult literacy campaign, and it collaborated with the OIAA to distribute more than 20,000 copies of the booklet.⁹⁰ For a later radio series, *Nuestro Mundo Maravilloso* [Our Marvelous World], the ministry donated all the printing paper in exchange for one third of the booklets. Focused on unique geographical features, the natural resources and the agriculture of the hemisphere, the ministry considered the series and the booklet valuable educational resources.⁹¹

As seen in the music program of the Centro Colombo-Americano, the OIAA recognized the power of music to bridge cultural divides as well as to establish US cultural credibility with Latin Americans. Thus, radio performance series were common OIAA offerings on Radiodifusora Nacional. Concerts by the Metropolitan Opera of New York, the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, and other fine arts and high-culture musical organizations were regularly aired on the station.⁹² University radio stations were also enthusiastic about such performance series. Given this enthusiasm, these emerging stations were also venues for OIAA music education programs such as “La Música en los Estados Unidos” [Music in the United States]; the series of 26 half-hour programs on

⁹⁰ Oswaldo Diaz Diaz, *Grandes Hombres de las Americas* (Bogotá: Coordination Committee of Inter-American Affairs for Colombia, 1944).

⁹¹ *Nuestro Mundo Maravilloso* (Bogotá: Editorial ABC, 1945).

⁹² Rankin, “Colombian Cooperation with the Coordination Committee for Colombia.”

discs, covered “all phases of music in American life” from opera to folk and included Spanish commentary explaining the origins and significance of each.⁹³ Radiodifusora Nacional, university stations, and the rapidly appearing commercial stations also had access to and borrowed from the American Music Loan Library housed in Bogotá’s Colombo-Americano.⁹⁴

More current and commercially popular US music, however, was simultaneously receiving increased airplay on Colombian stations with little assistance from the OIAA. Jazz and big band sounds were just being introduced on commercial stations in the interior, but on the Caribbean coast these had been recognizable genres since pre-radio days because international music, like international languages, were part of the cultural blend of the trans-Caribbean. Barranquilla’s proximity to Panama was important to the spread of US music from the Canal Zone, but it had been the arrivals and departures of cruise lines --with their on-board orchestras and dance bands-- that introduced new US music to the region. While in port, ship musicians often played local venues and gathered with Colombian musicians, and this practice facilitated movement of musical influences between the Americas.⁹⁵ Thus, as soon as commercial radio stations were established on the coast, contemporary US music was played in the mix with local Costeño, Caribbean and Latin American records. Later, OIAA music programs simply expanded the variety of US genres available in those local markets.

⁹³ Forney Rankin to Frederick Stimson, 12 Sept. 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín.

⁹⁴ Notice of Radio Program, 1944, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS; Radio Script, “Media Hora con los Grandes Maestros,” LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

⁹⁵ The Museo Romantico in Barranquilla is a small museum with an extensive collection of documents, cultural artifacts and memorabilia chronicling the life of the city from its founding to the present. See the scrapbook, “Influencia de la Música Norteamericana: Orchestras y Cantantes de Moda” for photos, musical programs, passenger liner entertainment programs, band performance schedules, and local music reviews evidencing contemporary US music influences beginning early in the century. See also Wade, *Music, Race, & Nation*.

Radio English

Measuring the radius and quality of signals allows for a technical understanding of radio reception, but such measurements reveal little about how listeners receive, process and respond to broadcast information and content. Articulating the non-technical aspects of human reception can be particularly challenging in the historical analysis of mass media; sources are more specific, more plentiful and easier to identify around the points of production and transmission than in the vast fields of reception. Thus far this chapter testifies to this source limitation. While historicizing significant collaboration between US and Colombian bureaucracies, businesses, and individuals in planning and transmitting OIAA radio programs and print resources, the analysis relies mostly on sources closer to the points of transmission than reception. As compared to the BNCs and American schools, OIAA mass media programs were not centered in well-defined educational communities and, thus, questions regarding reception of programs cannot be answered in institutional histories and analyses of community cultures. With regard to OIAA radio programs, many questions concerning local reception will remain unanswered because of the sheer size of the listening audience, its geographic dispersal, and the infinite subjectivities that conditioned listeners' engagement with program content. Yet, because education remained an important focus in radio programming, direct encounters between Colombian radio listeners and OIAA educators indeed took place. This was the case with English language courses presented via radio by the OIAA. While examining these educational encounters provides nothing close to a complete picture of how Colombians received, processed and responded to all OIAA radio programs, it is useful for identifying the range of Colombian reception.

The first OIAA English courses aired on Radiodifudora Nacional in collaboration with the Ministry of National Education in 1942. The ministry was then working toward establishing English as the primary foreign language of the national curriculum, and radio English courses supported its plan. Thus, it provided the OIAA with free airtime. At first, an intermediate/advanced level course was offered twice a week to coincide with the opening of the new Colombo-Americano. A beginner course followed with three weekly airings during prime evening hours.⁹⁶ Though the signals of Radiodifusora Nacional were received throughout the nation, it had limited listenership away from the capital and, notably, attracted very few listeners on the Caribbean coast.⁹⁷ That the station's programming was culturally Andean certainly gave it less appeal for potential listeners in Barranquilla, Cartagena, and Santa Marta. Thus when the OIAA repeated the course on the coast, it paid to air those programs on popular commercial stations. In Medellín, courses were given free airtime on the university station.

Demonstrated by a high volume of letters and comments it received, the ministry considered the courses a great success.⁹⁸ Among students at the National University, Rector Julio Carrizosa reported "extraordinary interest" in the courses.⁹⁹ Textbook sales provided a more concrete measurement of listener engagement with the courses in Bogotá and other locales. For each radio course, the OIAA printed a companion pamphlet with dialogues, exercises and grammar rules to serve as the course text. These short texts were usually created by staffers at the Centro Colombo-Americano in Bogotá, and

⁹⁶ David Richardson to David Lindquist, 16 Sept. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín.

⁹⁷ Richardson to Reed, 19 Aug. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Barranquilla, 1942.

⁹⁸ *Informe: Departamento de Extensión Cultural y Bellas Artes, 1942*, Ministerio de la Cultural, "Dirección de Extensión Cultural: Informes," 14/02/1, AGN.

⁹⁹ "Un Gran Exito Tuvo el Curso de Ingles Por Radio en Bogotá," *ET*, 3 Dec. 1942.

commonly as many as 3,000 copies sold before each airing.¹⁰⁰ So high was the demand for these print materials among the general public that courses were occasionally postponed so more texts could be printed before the scheduled start of a course. Coordination committees handled text distribution, and many were mailed to requesters outside urban centers but within the radius of the signal. Texts were always sold at or below cost as a specific strategy to attract a different class of radio students than the British, who charged a much higher fee for texts accompanying their occasional radio literature courses.¹⁰¹

The notion of teaching a language via radio seemed absurd to some. Rafael Guizado, who had been first Director of Radiodifusora Nacional, was a high profile critic of the OIAA courses. While confessing a comical fascination with the radio English lessons airing on his former station, he was not convinced the medium was a very good method for learning a language: “Language is the vehicle of dialogue; lacking dialogue it’s useless.” Guizado, an ardent Colombian nationalist, was also concerned with the cultural implications of broadly expanding English usage in Colombia: “History teaches us that nations that become powerful impose and teach their languages, while the nations destined to endure foreign influences, submit to the task of learning a foreign language.”¹⁰² While there is historical precedence for Guizado’s point, all Colombian engagement with the English language did not fall so neatly on a polarized continuum between imposition and submission, between coercion and consent.

¹⁰⁰ Rankin, “CI-AA in Colombia”; “Un Gran Exito Tuvo el Curso de Ingles Por Radio en Bogotá,” *ET*, 3 Dec. 1942.

¹⁰¹ Advertisement for Radio English Course, *El Liberal* (Bogota), 9 Sept. 1943; “Noticero Cultural,” *ET*, 16 July 1944; Harold Colvocoresses to Frederick Stimson, 16 Nov. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín; Frederick Stimson to Harold Colvocoresses, 8 Mar. 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín.

¹⁰² Rafael Guizado, “Un Dia Tras Otro,” *ET*, 26 Feb. 1943.

In Medellín, growth of OIAA English programs was driven by the local business community. The Department of Antioquia with its capital at Medellín was Colombia's industrial and agricultural powerhouse. Textiles and coffee led the region's economy and provided more abundant resources for structuring modernity than in any other area of the nation. Medellín was also the political center of partisan Conservatism and ground-zero of Catholic traditionalism. As compared to other departments, Antioquia's educational system was bolstered by its more substantial economic resources and its strong links to the Catholic Church. Not surprisingly, literacy rates in the department were higher than almost anywhere else in the nation. While the rate was just over 50% at start of war, in urban areas it approached 75% among school age children.¹⁰³

As a second language, English was less audible in Medellín than in the national capital and on the Caribbean coast, but in the early 1940s demand for English courses, teachers, and resources exploded in the city. Local schools turned to the coordination committee for teachers, textbooks and assistance planning curriculum. Significantly, requests from businesses outpaced those from educational institutions. Banks, factories, and export firms all repeatedly asked the committee to arrange courses for their employees. Given the volume of requests, the committee believed a cultural center, similar to the new Colombo-Americano in Bogotá but with a more specific business orientation, was the best way to meet local needs. The British had recently opened a branch of their Instituto Cultural Colombo-Británico in Medellín, but the committee found businesses to be more interested in learning American English. The committee identified the establishment of a BNC as its first priority. Yet, Washington was unwilling

¹⁰³ "Distribución de los habitantes, por secciones del país, según la instrucción," Cuadro 61, *Censo General de Población: 5 de Julio de 1938*, p. 127; "Analfabetismo Urbano y Rural," Cuadro 65, *Censo General de Población: 5 de Julio de 1938*, p. 131.

to commit to a second Colombo-Americano until the success of the new center in Bogotá was clear. In the meantime, the Medellín committee contracted locally residing US citizens to teach business English courses.¹⁰⁴ For the general public, it began radio courses.

Medellín's radio course was a repeat of those offered in Bogotá over Radiodifusora Nacional, with one important innovation in course format. In Medellín, "students of the air" were encouraged to complete homework assignments and mail or deliver them to the instructor at the committee's office. Assignments were corrected and returned weekly. The first course to air was for advanced students; twenty-six of them regularly submitted assignments. Many from that group later enrolled in a free follow-up course offered by the instructor; delivered in-person, the follow-up class allowed the instructor to have more personal interaction with his students, whom he described as having "good educations," coming from "fine families," and, given the advanced level of the course, knowing plenty of English. They were a mixture of old and young, and included police officers, housewives, and businessmen.¹⁰⁵ However, the general public widely criticized the first radio course because it was too advanced for most listeners. Requests for basic level courses poured into the committee office.¹⁰⁶ Quickly, such courses were planned and broadcast from a local university station "giving the programs the proper cultural backdrop." The committee also arranged to have the signal relayed to a more powerful commercial station which was popular with middle-class listeners, who formed an important core of Medellín's growing professional and business classes. To

¹⁰⁴ Minutes of the Medellín Sub-Committee, 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín.

¹⁰⁵ Frederick Stimson to Harold Colvocoresses. 24 Mar. 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín.

¹⁰⁶ Clifford H. Prator, "Report on the activities of Clifford H. Prator from August 1 to November 1, 1943," 1 Nov. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1361, F: Colombo Americano. See also in the same box/folder: Harold Colvocoresses to David Lindquist, 23 Sept. 1943; Frederick Stimson to Harold Colvocoresses, 9 Nov. 1943; David Lindquist to Harold Colvocoresses, 28 Oct. 1943.

give the lessons more interactive appeal, the instructor hired local assistants to “dramatize” the class and add local accents.¹⁰⁷

In Barranquilla demand for English was quite different. The Department of Atlántico of which Barranquilla is the capital also had an overall literacy rate near 50%. Comparable to that of Antioquia, the rate distinguished the department from the rest of the coast and most of nation. A small department centered on its capital, Atlántico’s population was 90% urban; its relative success with literacy reflected the national norm of greater concentration of educational resources in urban rather than rural communities. More specifically, higher literacy reflected the city’s relative ability to finance basic primary education through the import and export trade of the local economy. As compared with Medellín, however, secondary school options in Atlántico were limited.

Importantly, foreign languages were commonly spoken in and around Barranquilla. German, Italian and Middle Eastern immigrant populations added their national languages to the region’s trans-Caribbean linguistic mix. Long before the OIAA began promoting English language teaching in that port city, English words and phrases were part of the international vocabulary that made its way into local usage through music, commerce, tourism and sport (especially baseball). While US culture was the root of some English language influences on the coast, it was not an exclusive source.¹⁰⁸

English speaking islands dot the Caribbean and include a unique Colombian territory, the archipelago of San Andrés and Providencia. Settled by the British as slave plantations, the islands eventually ended up under Spanish control and joined with Gran

¹⁰⁷ Minutes of the Medellín Sub-Committee, 23 Dec. 1943.

¹⁰⁸ Universidad Autónoma del Caribe, “Influencia de los Estadounidenses en Barranquilla,” *Documento* 19 (March 2006); “Influencia de la Música Norteamericana: Orchestras y Cantantes de Moda,” Museo Romántico.

Colombia at independence. In the 1930s, the islands' population was small, but owing to the British legacy of schooling, it was highly literate. At approximately 87%, the descendants of slaves on the archipelago had the highest literacy rates in Colombia.¹⁰⁹ In addition to the language influences of these native English-speaking Colombians, Barranquilla and the coastal region also encountered the English tongue via radio signals from the British West Indies and Panama. Additionally, as a major metropolitan port, Barranquilla was home to English speaking foreigners from across the Greater Caribbean; most notable were locally-residing Jamaicans.¹¹⁰

As compared to Medellín, demand for English teaching resources was lower in Barranquilla because there were greater options for learning and using the language. As a result, the coordination committee never recommended a cultural institute for the city; indeed, members recommended against establishing one even as the OIAA was interested in making the city the second Colombian site for a BNC. The committee believed the market for English teaching in Barranquilla was already satisfied. They noted an abundance of Jamaican and other Caribbean English teachers in the city as well as a growing number of small commercial schools run by North American and Cuban women. Additionally, they detected an “indifferent attitude of students” on the coast that limited their enthusiasm for a BNC. Suggesting influences of geographic determinism in vogue in that era, the committee thought the indifferent attitudes of some students was “possibly

¹⁰⁹ “Población de edad escolar, alfabeto y analfabeto,” Cuadro 63, *Censo General de Poblacion: 5 de Julio de 1938*, p. 129. On schooling in Providencia and San Andrés as a challenge to Colombian cultural unity see Sharika Crawford, “Under the Colombian Flag: Nation-Building on San Andrés and Providence Islands, 1886-1930” (PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2009).

¹¹⁰ “Nacionalidad, por sección del país y sexo,” Cuadro 62, *Censo General de Poblacion: 5 de Julio de 1938*, p. 144-147; Forney Rankin to Carl Sauer, 24 Mar. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1361, F: Colombian American Center; Ed Murphy from unsigned, May 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Folder: Barranquilla, 1942.

because of the climate.”¹¹¹ The response to OIAA radio English courses in Barranquilla, however, was anything but indifferent.

The first radio English courses in Barranquilla were transcribed rebroadcasts of the original Bogotá course. Popular from the start, subsequent courses followed the more engaging format established in Medellín and were repeated throughout the war. To reach the widest audience, the OIAA paid for evening time-slots on commercial stations.¹¹²

Initiated with a US instructor, locally produced radio courses were subsequently presented by Margot de Zuñiga, a Cuban national who had lived most of her life in New York and was a teacher at the Colegio Karl C. Parrish. Students could interact with the instructor by sending assignments for correction, and, remarkably, approximately one hundred students did so weekly when each course aired. In addition, the instructor scheduled office hours for twelve hours a week to meet and converse with students. Students took full advantage, and they made constant appeals to the coordination committee to expand course offerings. On the committee’s recommendation, the OIAA was willing to finance courses on an ongoing basis under Zuñiga except during Carnival season; during that two month period from Christmas through the start of Lent, Barranquillero culture was (and continues to be) dedicated to socializing and celebrating in the streets. Serious pursuits are put on hold.¹¹³

Response by individuals to radio courses in Barranquilla can be gauged by purchases of course texts, completion of weekly assignments, and attendance at office

¹¹¹ Myron Reed to David Richardson, 28 Sep. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Barranquilla, 1942.

¹¹² Forney Rankin to Karl C. Parrish, 8 Sep. 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1358, F: Barranquilla from January 1944; David Richardson to M.A. Blanco, Emisora Atlántico, 16 Dec. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Barranquilla, 1942.

¹¹³ Frederick Stimson to Forney Rankin, 12 Jan. 1945, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín. Frederick Stimson to Karl C. Parrish, Jr., 17 Oct. 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1358, F: Barranquilla from January 1944. In the same box/folder see: Stimson to Rankin, 18 Nov. 1944; Stimson to Rankin, 26 Nov. 1944; Rankin to Parrish, Jr., 26 Dec. 1944; Parrish, Jr., to Rankin, 18 Dec. 1944.

hours. Further, insight into reception can be garnered from the many letters received by the coordination committee at the conclusion of each course. Such letters expressed appreciation, requested continuation, and suggested course modifications. Filled with terms of endearment for the instructors, letters written in English were replete with errors in grammar, spelling, phrasing, and word choice that is typical of English language learners. Most letters were written in Spanish with apologies from the authors for not being yet able to communicate adequately in written English.¹¹⁴

One recurring theme characterized the letters received. Most of the students equated English with modernity and believed learning it was important for their futures. Self-conscious about the quality of his wording but willing to make mistakes, Euclides Barrios expressed just that point in imperfect English: “We are in an epoch of advance and progress consequently humanity need prepare themselves with a practically fundament and theory. This is the way we are going in the cross of life.”¹¹⁵ Tulia O. de Berdugo concurred; she believed learning English should be a major concern for anyone thinking toward the future.¹¹⁶ Alfonso Soria, who described himself as “a diligent listener” [*oyente diligente*] of the program, offered that English would be important in Colombia for the duration of the war and well after.¹¹⁷ For some students, like Sols Barrios, future career opportunities were the incentive for learning English.¹¹⁸ Others

¹¹⁴ Letters are found throughout the files of the Coordination Committees for Colombia. Many related to radio English in Barranquilla are located in NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1358, F: Barranquilla from January 1944.

¹¹⁵ Euclides Barrios to Frederick Stimson, 22 Jan. 1945 [in English], NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1358, F: Barranquilla from January 1944.

¹¹⁶ Tulia O. de Berdugo to Comité de Coordinación de Asuntos Inter-Americanos, 4 July 1945, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1358, F: Barranquilla from January 1944.

¹¹⁷ Alfonso Soria to Frederick Stimson, 2 Jan. 1945, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1358, F: Barranquilla from January 1944.

¹¹⁸ Sol Barrios to Margot de Zuñiga, 1 July 1945, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1358, F: Barranquilla from January 1944.

approached language learning as crucial to uniting the Americas. Endorsing a close Colombian and US relationship, they painted the future in political and cultural shades of Pan Americanism.¹¹⁹

Also clear from these letters was that OIAA radio English was not imposed upon the listeners. Nor were radio students passively submitting to linguistic imperialism. Living in a large urban center within the Greater Caribbean, foreign languages and their influences were already imbedded in Barranquillero culture. Use of English in commerce, politics, and entertainment was clearly on the rise, and the new national curriculum standards further reinforced this trend. Yet, beyond the level of primary schooling, formal educational resources were limited on the coast; easy access to OIAA radio lessons, texts, and instructors gave adults on the coast educational options they lacked. Thus did Elsa Nieto and others consider the OIAA lessons generous support toward cultural developments in the city.¹²⁰ Students were especially grateful for the low priced texts.¹²¹ That direct relationships were encouraged and supported between instructor and learners through office hours was also highly appreciated; limited only by her English vocabulary, Carmen Solano expressed her “gladness for the huge idea of talking with the own pupils, in order to practice the conversation which is most important thing in learning of this language.”¹²² Significantly, as she and hundreds of others actively engaged with radio resources of the OIAA, the English program was adapted to their needs. The coordination committee and its Cuban instructor responded to requests for slower enunciation, interest

¹¹⁹ L.A. Buitrago to Margot de Zuñiga, 6 June 1945, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1358, F: Barranquilla from January 1944.

¹²⁰ Elsa Nieto to Margot de Zuñiga, 3 Jan. 1945, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1358, F: Barranquilla from January 1944.

¹²¹ Ramon Renowitzky to Frederick Stimson, 30 Dec. 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1358, F: Barranquilla from January 1944.

¹²² Carmen Solano to Margot de Zuñiga, 6 June 1945, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1358, F: Barranquilla from January 1944.

in more difficult vocabulary, calls for more varied content, and repeated demands to schedule new courses.¹²³ In this process, students and teachers constructed nontraditional but modern transnational educational communities in a region where available resources were scarce. These communities were certainly less developed and more fleeting than the educational and cultural communities that developed around BNCs and American schools, yet in their moment they were functional for Colombians who sought cross-border tools to construct their futures.

Non-Theatrical Film

Tremendously popular with the laboring classes, commercial cinema grew as an entertainment outlet in the principal cities of Colombia apace with accelerated urbanization. Though French, Italian and German films had strong Colombian screen presence before World War I, the silent films produced in Hollywood became the common fare in the course of that war.¹²⁴ Because studios recovered production costs and made considerable profit in US markets, films were exported cheaply to Latin America allowing for low ticket prices that were within the reach of some categories of laborers.¹²⁵ By the early 1930s, when talking soundtracks complemented moving images, Hollywood's dominance of commercial film showings in urban Colombia, as throughout Latin America, was well established. Significantly, these films gave many Colombians their first glimpses of contemporary US cultures and lifestyles. Though these glimpses

¹²³ Andres Humberto Peñate to Margot de Zuñiga, 6 June 1945, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1358, F: Barranquilla from January 1944. In the same box/folder: Alvaro Martinez to Margot de Zuñiga, 5 July 1945; Alfredo Pardo to Margot de Zuñiga, 15 June 1945.

¹²⁴ Gerald Martin, "Literature, Music and the Visual Arts, c. 1870-1930," in *A Cultural History of Latin America: Literature and the Visual Arts in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Leslie Bethel (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 47-130. On Colombian cinema see Hernando Salcedo Silva, *Crónica del cine colombiano, 1897-1950* (Bogotá, 1981). On Hollywood film in Latin America after World War I see Gaizka S. de Usabel, *The High Noon of American Films in Latin America*.

¹²⁵ John King, "Cinema," in *A Cultural History of Latin America*, p. 458.

were often heavy with caricature and sensationalism, they were, nonetheless, the most tangible representations of the US and its peoples available to many Colombians. At the same time in the US, Hollywood films were also influential in reinforcing views of Latin America as Indian lands that were lost to modernity.

During the war, the OIAA collaborated with commercial film studios in both the US and Mexico in its campaign for hemispheric unity. In Mexico this work entailed direct OIAA support to build the national film industry.¹²⁶ In the US, the agency worked with Hollywood studios. Production of films to promote Pan American unity and to eliminate film depictions that fed stereotypes within the Americas was the goal. To this end the OIAA considered its efforts very successful. In the course of the war, the OIAA made recommendations to the industry for specific films as well as suggested changes to scripts, final edits and everything in between. If the agency's Motion Picture Division identified films it thought would be particularly effective in Latin America, Hollywood producers agreed to accelerate sound tracking in Spanish and Portuguese, and the division secured transport priorities for the films. Additionally, the OIAA often paid studios to print extra copies of films in order to get wider exposure. Separately, the division also collaborated with the major newsreel companies in the US to get more Pan American, Latin American, and anti-Axis content into their weekly distributions to region.¹²⁷ By the end of the war, when weekly audiences of US commercial films in Latin America reached over 20 million, Hollywood studios had produced 134 theatrical

¹²⁶ Seth Fein, "Hollywood and United States-Mexico Relations in the Golden Age of Mexican Cinema" (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1996); Fein, "Myths of Cultural Imperialism and Nationalism in Golden Age Mexican Cinema," in *Fragments of a Golden Age: The Politics of Culture in Mexico Since 1940*, eds. Gilbert M. Joseph, Anne Rubenstein, and Eric Zolov (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), pp. 159-198.

¹²⁷ Francis Alstock, "Confidential Memo for Coordination Committees," 23 Sep. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Motion Pictures, B1371, F: 1942.

films in direct cooperation with the OIAA. These films accounted for almost half of the industry's wartime output. At the same time, OIAA-Hollywood collaboration resulted in 100 non-theatrical short subject films with Latin American content. Such "shorts" had cultural, educational, and propaganda value and were screened in commercial cinemas as bonus reels with feature films.¹²⁸

OIAA efforts with non-theatrical film were not limited to commercial shorts produced by Hollywood studios. Indeed, during the war the OIAA was actively involved in producing and distributing educational, cultural, and war propaganda film for non-commercial viewing. This non-theatrical film program brought OIAA films to schools, factories, churches, public parks and plazas throughout Latin America, and it reached a monthly audience of more than five million by the end of the war.¹²⁹ Using 16mm reels, which were easier to project and transport than bulkier 35mm reels used in commercial cinemas, the OIAA established film collections throughout the region and relied on coordination committees to develop distribution channels at the local level.¹³⁰ To facilitate screenings, more than 300 projectors were transferred to the committees. The OIAA also negotiated for the use of a fleet of more than 200 sound trucks owned by US businesses in the region.

The early OIAA films had been originally produced by US government agencies, foundations, educational institutions, and businesses; the OIAA acquired rights to these films and often added Spanish or Portuguese soundtracks before films were shipped to

¹²⁸ Rowland, *History of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs*, p. 68; OIAA Motion Picture Division, "List of Hollywood-Made Films," Aug. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Motion Pictures, B1371, F: 1942; OIAA Motion Picture Section, "Emergency Program for Immediate Action – Planned," 1941, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Motion Pictures, B1371, F: 1942.

¹²⁹ OIAA, "Summary of Activities: Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs," 18 Aug 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1362, F: Bogotá Correspondence.

¹³⁰ David Richardson to Myron Reed, 17 Jan. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Barranquilla, 1943.

coordination committees. Educational and cultural titles were most common. While this method of repackaging continued throughout the war, the OIAA soon began contracting for original films to meet more specific policy objectives as the war intensified. By the last months of the war, the OIAA catalog contained more than 600 titles available for its Latin American and domestic film program. More than half of these films were focused on the war effort while education, medicine and culture were also well represented. Films on industry, transportation, agriculture, and health rounded out the collection.¹³¹

In Colombia, the Ministry of National Education encouraged non-theatrical film showings by the OIAA. The interest of ministry officials in film as an instructional medium matched their enthusiasm for radio. Through an organizational division for educational cinema and cultural propaganda, the ministry had itself attempted to harness the power of film to unify the nation in a quest for modernity. Ministry officials professed faith that the medium could be used to rectify deficiencies in the national education system and reach the nation's undereducated and illiterate majority. National educational and cultural values would be established and reinforced through films treating a range of themes: nation and region, literacy and art, industry and agriculture, health and hygiene. As school expansion campaigns played out, classrooms were a primary venue for educational and cultural film, and the ministry --concerned that the medium be more than spectacle-- promoted pedagogical standards for integrating the technology into learning environments. It strongly recommended that students always have introductory assignments related to each film, that teachers use microphones during projection to provide commentary, that lectures on film topics immediately follow screening, and that

¹³¹ Rowland, *History of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs*, p. 70

students write follow-up compositions or create drawings explaining the focus of film.¹³² The ministry's film program was not, however, developed exclusively for school children. Educational and cultural films were to be brought to barracks, prisons, hospitals, asylums, orphanages, and public plazas. At such sites, where most audiences were captive audiences, the ministry believed film could be effectively used to plant an "educational seed" [*semilla eductiva*]. In addition to planting that seed, it hoped film like radio would help to cultivate nationalism by exalting common virtues across regions.¹³³

To convert educational rhetoric into practice, the ministry needed a supply of films that were explicitly tied to its goals. Thus, it initiated a plan for documentary films on each region of the nation. Though the ministry produced some films and made funding and technical assistance available, actual film production was largely left to the departmental governments.¹³⁴ Not surprisingly, few departments had adequate resources and expertise to complete the films. Those films resulting from the initiative mostly projected the cultures of historically dominant cities and regions: Bogotá, Medellín, the Department of Antioquia, and the surrounding coffee region.¹³⁵ To this sparse collection of films in the ministry's collection were added reels produced by the military and poorly edited footage of national monuments, political ceremonies, regional festivals and parades. Short films explicitly promoting commercial products but set against regional backdrops were also available from Avianca Airlines, the National Federation of Coffee Growers, various Colombian tobacco companies, and departmental lottery agencies.

¹³² Castro M., *Educación Nacional – Informe al Congreso: 1938*, p. 60.

¹³³ Gonzalo Acevedo (MEN/Sección de Cinematografía Educativa) to Governors and Directors of Education in the Departments, in *Informe del Director de Educación Nacional al Señor Gobernador del Departamento* (Barranquilla: Dirección de Educación Pública del Departamento del Atlántico, 1939), pp. 183-184.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 182-185.

¹³⁵ Director of Extensión Cultural to MRREE, 8 June 1940, "Correspondence con el Ministerio de Educación Nacional: 1940," 704/91/73, AMRE, Sección Primera AGN.

Through the early 1940s, the ministry continued to produce films and contract with commercial filmmakers while encouraging production in each of the departments. Yet, by 1942, it was forced to conclude that “the quality of the films do not justify the cost.”¹³⁶ The ministry soon suspended production and limited itself to distribution.

Government reliance on foreign sources of educational film was well established before the OIAA film program began. Before the war, the official collection housed in Bogotá contained many titles produced in the major industrialized nations. German, Italian and the US films dominated. Most of the European films were subtitled or soundtracked in Spanish, but most from the US were not. As a result, projection of US films usually necessitated the use of speakers and microphones so the audience could be given explanations and commentary.¹³⁷ Many of the foreign films in ministry and department collections had been purchased by Colombian diplomats overseas or donated by foreign governments: reels, projectors, and portable generators which were “transportable on the back of a mule” were purchased by the Colombian legation in Rome, while the British government presented a variety of documentary films including *Around the Village Green* and *Heart of an Empire* to Colombian representatives in London.¹³⁸ Significantly, most of the educational and cultural films from the US had been donated upon request of the Colombian government; film exchange protocols had been established through earlier Pan American conferences, and the ministry actively invoked

¹³⁶ “...la calidad de las películas filmadas no justificaba su costo...” Rafael Pargas Cortés, *Memoria del Ministro de Educación Nacional al Congreso de 1943: Extensión Cultural*, Volume II (Bogotá: 1943), p. 46.

¹³⁷ “Informe del Director de la Biblioteca Nacional,” in Castro M., *Educación Nacional – Informe al Congreso: 1938*, p. 132.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 152; Director of Extension Cultural to MRREE, 22 Nov. 1940. “Correspondence con el Ministerio de Educación Nacional: 1940-41,” 705/92/24, AMRE, Sección Primera, AGN.

them to supplement its slim collections.¹³⁹ While the ministry did not expect foreign films to contribute directly to nationalist sentiments, it valued many of them for their educational content. Additionally, relying on foreign sources was the only way to keep the ministry's educational cinema program functioning as a model for the various departmental school systems.¹⁴⁰

The film program in Barranquilla and the Department of Atlántico before the war demonstrates the vast gulf between the promise and practice of educational cinema in Colombia. In that department, education officials recognized film as a powerful medium that should be used in education to the greatest extent possible.¹⁴¹ Excepting Medellín, Bogotá and their immediate environs, Barranquilla's film program was more active than those of most other regions. Still, economic resources for the program were not sufficient. Equipment costs and ongoing repairs taxed educational budgets, and projectionists, who were paid at the municipal level, were often cut from payrolls.¹⁴² Further complicating the program, adequate facilities for screening film with school children were lacking; given the intense, year-round heat and humidity of the Caribbean coast, hanging darkening curtains over classroom windows was impractical and unwise. Only one school in the entire department could comfortably accommodate an audience, and the logistics and costs of transporting students from a distance made its use impractical. Education officials occasionally sent a projectionist to schools and social clubs throughout the city and region, and they saw such circulating tours as the best approach for reaching both children and adults. They just did not have the resources to mount a regular program.

¹³⁹ MEN, *Memoria de Educación Nacional: 1939*, p. 75.

¹⁴⁰ MEN to OIAA, "Questions Regarding Educational and Commercial Films," 25 Aug. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Motion Pictures, B1371, F: 1942; Gaitán, *La obra educativa del gobierno en 1940*, p. 140.

¹⁴¹ Julio Enrique Blanco, *Informe del Director de Educación Nacional al Señor Gobernador del Departamento* (Barranquilla: Dirección de Educación Pública del Departamento del Atlántico, 1939), p. 31.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

Despite these challenges, the department's education officials remained committed to the program and managed to hold almost 500 showings for children and adults in 1938.

Atlántico's film catalog, however, reveals just how difficult it was to achieve the program's broad goals of building nationalist sentiment and increasing educational levels.

The meager catalog of just three dozen titles included some Colombian-made films about Catholicism and air travel but most were of foreign origin. There were several German, Italian, and Argentine cultural films, and a full third were from the US. Received through Pan American exchange programs and focused on the infrastructure of modernity, some of these films on water power, fire fighting, census taking and electricity had general educational value. Yet, much of their content was US-specific and most were only in English. The other US films in the catalog had more dubious educational value:

promotional materials from Hollywood and older, commercially produced cartoons featuring Popeye, Sinbad, Mickey Mouse and Ali Baba.¹⁴³ As it existed before the war, educational cinema in the Department of Atlántico was more about entertainment and exposure to things foreign than Colombianidad and educational improvement. Later, when the OIAA film program was established, US additions to departmental collections increased substantially, and screenings of educational, cultural and propaganda films rose dramatically on the coast and throughout Colombia.

US Educational, Cultural and Propaganda Films

For US educators interested in film as instructional media, federal government departments were a primary source in the late 1930s. The Departments of Agriculture, Interior, and War had their own production facilities and thus had the most extensive

¹⁴³ Jorge E. Chaparro B to Señor Director de Educación Nacional del Atlántico in *Informe del Director de Educación Nacional al Señor Gobernador del Departamento*, pp. 175-179.

collections. Of the estimated 500 federal government films then in circulation, more than two-thirds had an agricultural focus; these films were educational in nature, but they had limited appeal as classroom resources outside farm communities. Films by the Department of the Interior had wider educational appeal. Framed by the philosophy of indigenismo, many of the films chronicled North American Indian cultures facing the challenges of modernity. National parks, dam projects, mining, and petroleum were also popular subjects. Other titles useful to educators were produced by the US Office of Education and the Surgeon General as well as private schools and colleges. Notably, the early instructional films produced by government bureaucracies were known to be dry and dull. Yet, as this genre of film developed, government producers better understood that education and entertainment need not be mutually exclusive; more interesting titling, more compelling narration, more appealing angles, and a sense of drama increasingly infused instructional film.¹⁴⁴

Through the Pan American educational and technical exchange arrangements of late 1930s, US educational films began to flow to Latin America via US ambassadors and the Pan American Union.¹⁴⁵ The pre-war US film catalog offered for distribution in the region included thirty short films. Most had been produced by the Departments of Agriculture and Interior. One of the agricultural films had been produced for Spanish speaking populations in the US Southwest and had a Spanish soundtrack, but all others were in English.¹⁴⁶ As the war approached and the OIAA appeared, the catalog boasted more diversified subjects and increased Spanish and Portuguese sound tracking. Cultural

¹⁴⁴ Fanning Hearon, "The Motion-Picture Program and Policy of the United States Government," *Journal of Educational Sociology* 12, no. 3 (November 1938), p. 151.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 147-162.

¹⁴⁶ Catalog, *United States Governmental Films-1940*, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Motion Pictures, B1371, F: 1942.

and educational content remained the focus, and the catalog now included educational films commercially produced for US classrooms. Health and science topics were more plentiful. So, too, were instructional sports films like *Basketball Technique*, an 8-minute short produced by MGM and featuring university players from UCLA, Fordham, and Iowa State. But whereas earlier film exchanges sent titles produced exclusively with US content, films in the new OIAA program featured objective-driven Pan American content. Some films emphasized the shared religious and cultural heritage between the US and Latin America: *Archbishop Cantwell's Pilgrimage* chronicled the visit of the Catholic prelate of Los Angeles to Guadalupe Basilica in Mexico City and *La Fiesta de Santa Barbara* highlighted "Spanish-American" festivals in California. Other titles focused on Latin America's natural resources that were in high demand for wartime defense. More politically focused films, like *Ten Years of Progress Under President Vargas*, celebrated Latin American leaders who were actively supporting Washington's Pan American programs or the Allied cause.¹⁴⁷

After Pearl Harbor, the OIAA non-theatrical film program shifted more explicitly into the domain of propaganda. Two new film series were initiated and dominated OIAA production for the remainder of war. Films in the "Power to Win" series emphasized the military and industrial strength of the US to defeat the Axis. One of the first releases in the series was *Victory for the Americas*. The film chronicled a group of Latin American journalists visiting war production plants across the US on a State Department sponsored tour. Ending in a meeting with US Vice President Henry Wallace, who addressed the journalists in Spanish, the film was marketed to coordination committees as "potent and

¹⁴⁷ Catalog, "Motion Picture Section, 16mm Films," 15 Dec. 1941, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Motion Pictures, B1371, F: 1942.

persuasive.” The second series was categorized as “ideological” and promoted democracy and Pan Americanism over fascism and radicalism. What the OIAA considered “hard-hitting” comparisons of democratic and Axis ways of life were common; *Hitler’s Plan for the Americas*, for example, detailed a Nazi plan to “dominate Latin America, destroying industry, encouraging a slave agricultural economy and creating a continent of peons.”¹⁴⁸ With the introduction of the two new propaganda series, OIAA film catalogs rapidly reflected the change. Of eighty-one OIAA films available in Colombia in August 1942, approximately one third of the selections were in the series “Power to Win”: films featured US military resources, emphasized combat power, and explained the selective service. The second third were from the “Ideological” series. Films featuring Pan American cultural unity included *Sons of America*, documenting the enlistment of a young New Mexican of Spanish ancestry into the army. Economic interdependence in the Americas was stressed in *Pan American Bazaar*, which featured scenes of Latin American products being enthusiastically purchased by New Yorkers. *Nobel Prize Winners in Exile* presented the US as an intellectual sanctuary for Europeans and *Education for Slaughter* explained how German youth were indoctrinated in Nazi controlled classrooms. Such films as *America is Not Imperialistic* and *The US and the Philippines* reinforced that respect and mutual understanding grounded FDR’s approach to foreign policy. More general educational, cultural, agricultural, and health films made up the final third of the catalog.¹⁴⁹

Showings of non-theatrical films in Colombia were organized by coordination committees with assistance from the OIAA press office in Bogotá. Committees hired

¹⁴⁸ Alstock, “Confidential Memo for Coordination Committees,” 23 Sep. 1942.

¹⁴⁹ List of Non-Theatrical Films, OIAA Motion Picture Division, Aug. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Motion Pictures, B1371, F: 1942.

Colombian projectionists, secretaries, and technicians to run the day-to-day operation, and the program grew through direct collaboration with the Ministry of National Education, educational officials in the departments, the military, schools, cultural groups, businesses and professional organizations. In the course of the war, thousands of showings took place, and non-theatrical OIAA films reached a total audience of over five million Colombians. The laboring class (workers and their families) accounted for 42% of all showings and more than half of all viewers. While screenings were at times arranged in factories and on job sites, most of this viewing took place on the plazas of working class neighborhoods or barrios. The second highest number of screenings, 23%, was for professional groups such as medical doctors, lawyers, educators, engineers, and architects, but because these professional classes were relatively small, these showings were often for only a handful of people at a time. Thus, they represented just 1% of total viewers. Members of the Colombian military actually made up the second highest category of viewership; a prime audience of the “Power to Win” series, soldiers were given just 13% of total showings but were 34% of total viewers. Schools, at 15% of showings and 6% of viewers, and church groups, at 8% of showings and 3% of viewers, rounded out the program.¹⁵⁰ While at least 346 cities and villages across the nation hosted screenings through 1945, most viewers lived in urban areas.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Through 1944, there were 5,563 screenings of OIAA non-theatrical film in Colombia for an audience that totaled 4,998,087. There were 2,320 films screenings in working class barrios and factories; they reached an audience of 2,842,513. Screenings for professional groups totaled 1,263 and had a total audience of 31,690. Military groups had 733 screenings and an audience of 1,716,998 service members. School and church groups had 808 and 439 screenings respectively. Audience totals were 276,513 for schools and 130,375 for churches. Forney Rankin, “CIAA Post-War Motion Picture 16mm Program – Colombia,” October 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1377, File: Reports, March 1942 to September 1944, p. 23.

¹⁵¹ Rankin, “CI-AA Statistical Report.”

Urban Screenings: The Barrio Film program

Reaching the laboring class with educational and cultural film was a prime objective of the Ministry of National Education. In and around the national capital, where its influence was most concentrated, the ministry initiated a barrio film program in line with its broad goals of educational and cultural outreach. Bringing film into the neighborhoods where poor workers lived gave the ministry a forum for reaching an urban population that was largely illiterate. With its pool of national films limited in quality and quantity, and with a deepening aversion and eventual refusal to use German and Italian films in its collection, the ministry's barrio film program relied heavily on OIAA films. Officials regularly chose titles from the OIAA collection in Bogotá and held them until each had been shown throughout its barrio circuit. Significantly, they borrowed only educational and cultural films and avoided subjects that were too closely tied to war propaganda. In reports offered to the OIAA as a courtesy, projectionists employed by the ministry noted audience size and anecdotal comments about viewer reception for each film. Such comments were very general but infrequently noted any critical reaction.¹⁵²

Following the ministry's model and with its approval, the OIAA began its own barrio film programs. In bringing film into working class barrios, the OIAA chose locales where they could reach "a class so poor that they would never be able to attend the theater."¹⁵³ Coordinated with local community leaders, screenings took place on a regular schedule in barrios of cities where coordination committees existed. Popular and in high demand at the local level, showings were soon extended into surrounding towns. Where a local leader or community organization owned projection equipment, the program was

¹⁵² José María Villareal Santos to Luis González, 5 July 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1372, F: Solicita de Películas.

¹⁵³ Robert Parrish to Nelson Rockefeller, 19 Nov. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Airgrams.

run at the neighborhood level. Local organizers, such as Monseñor Garzón and Father Caicedo, simply chose from the OIAA collection and made their own arrangements for viewing. Where local equipment did not exist but interest was high, a projectionist employed by the OIAA arrived on a weekly basis and held showings after dark on a central plaza. Crowds varied by barrio and town but usually ranged from 100 to as many as 4000. Projectionists consistently reported high enthusiasm for films and always noted that sports films and cartoons received animated and extended applause.¹⁵⁴ To spur educational officials at the department level to develop barrio film programs of their own, the ministry had provided departments with sound trucks. Equipped with projection equipment including portable generators, these trucks were also mounted with speakers to accommodate outdoor screenings in both urban and rural settings. Recognizing their own limitations for developing a program, education officials in Bogotá, Medellín and Barranquilla loaned their trucks to coordination committees to do it for them.¹⁵⁵ All continually expressed deep appreciation to the committees for their efforts to spread educational film in marginal barrios and remote rural zones.

Significantly, OIAA film screenings often served as *de facto* community meetings at which civic organizations made announcements or held discussions with the crowds gathered. Where no community spokesperson came forward, the OIAA projectionist was often asked to make announcements on such topics as school schedules, government price controls on butter and sugar, or the needs of local orphans.¹⁵⁶ On the coast,

¹⁵⁴ Projectionist Reports, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Reports, B1376, F: Shows Numbered Reports 10/43 to 1/44. In the same box see: F: Shows Numbered Reports: April to October 1944; F: Shows Numbered Reports.

¹⁵⁵ Rankin, "Colombian Cooperation with the Coordination Committee for Colombia"; Minutes of the Medellín Sub-Committee, 29 Nov. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín.

¹⁵⁶ Gabriel Avelino Romero to Film Operator in Barrio Santa Sofia, 28 Oct. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Reports, B1372, F: Solicita de Peliculas. In the same box/folder: Gabriel Avelino Romero to Sr. Film

showings had a decidedly festive atmosphere. OIAA projectionists in Barranquilla had originally reported considerable difficulties holding the attention of the crowds through the changing of the reels. The committee's solution was playing Caribbean and Latin American dance music (indicative that international music was already popular in that region) through the speakers of the sound truck to encourage a "neighborhood fiesta."¹⁵⁷ Such informality on the coast contrasted sharply with showings in more formal Medellín. There maintaining order among the masses was taken more seriously. Strong anticommunism was ingrained in the cultural psyche of the city, and concern for working class radicalism was especially pronounced among political, business, and church leaders. Thus, the city often arranged for a police presence for OIAA screenings in working class barrios.¹⁵⁸

In Bogotá, an additional venue for OIAA films was the Teatro Cultural [Cultural Theater]. A theater in a park in central Bogotá, the teatro staged puppet shows and screened films directly tied to the cultural and educational objectives of the ministry. Daily showings were free of charge with local schools attending during early hours and the general public invited in the afternoon. Running programs from the early 1940s forward, the teatro was the site of one-third of all ministry film showings.¹⁵⁹ Importantly, the aging film collection of the teatro was supplemented with films selectively chosen and borrowed from OIAA catalogs. The teatro provided huge audiences for OIAA films. In a run of a half dozen films shown repeatedly over the course of a couple months, more

Operator in Barrio Santa Sofia, 21 Oct.1943; Antonio Lizarazo to Sr. Operator of Film Showings in Barrio Las Ferias, 19 Sept. 1944.

¹⁵⁷ Harold Colvocoresses to Edwin Sours, 9 July 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Barranquilla, 1943.

¹⁵⁸ Rankin, "Colombian Cooperation with the Coordination Committee for Colombia." On fears of labor radicalism and factory paternalism in Medellín, see Ann Farnsworth-Alvear, *Dulcinea in the Factory* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000).

¹⁵⁹ MEN to OIAA, "Questions Regarding Educational and Commercial Films," 25 Aug. 1942.

than 50,000 people were reached. Regular communications from theater administrators to the Bogotá coordination committee expressed gratitude for collaboration. The director also indicated that films about aviation, sports, student life in the US, boats, and geography received the most positive reaction from school groups.¹⁶⁰

Rural Screenings: Escuelas Ambulantes and the Sydney Ross Company

While urbanization was changing the character of Colombian society before mid-century, the majority of the populations still lived in rural zones where illiteracy rates far exceeded 50%. To extend education and culture into the countryside, ministry officials established *Escuelas Ambulantes* [traveling schools] in 1940. These mobile educational units were financed by donations from national and foreign businesses including public utilities, breweries, mining, tobacco, and oil companies. As part of a campaign to democratize culture, they were outfitted to provide educational, cultural, and health programming in areas where schools did not exist. Staffed by educators, artists, musicians, and health professionals, the trucks also carried projection and sound equipment for use with radio and film. From the start, the ministry borrowed heavily from the OIAA film catalog for the program.¹⁶¹ While the ministry ran the program for the first two years to establish it as a model, it subsequently transferred the trucks and responsibilities to the departments. There, local education officials continued to rely on OIAA film resources. In Barranquilla, as in other areas of the nation, the coordination committee lent projectors in addition to films to the *Escuelas Ambulantes* because it was

¹⁶⁰ List of Films that are Screened by the Teatro Cultural, 1943, Ministerio de la Cultura, 13/25/1, AGN; Antonio Angulo, Report on Film Screenings in the Teatro Cultural, 4 May 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Motion Pictures, B1371, F: 1942.

¹⁶¹ Jack Fahy to Secretary of the Minister of National Education, 11 Dec. 1941, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Motion Pictures, B1371, F: 1942; MEN to OIAA, "Questions Regarding Educational and Commercial Films," 25 Aug. 1942.

a “very effective method of reaching a wide range of spectators.”¹⁶² There, as elsewhere, education officials had unrestricted choice of films, but they always borrowed those they perceived to have educational and cultural value. Film screenings proved important to drawing audiences to these traveling schools; audience sizes ranged from a few dozen to several thousand people depending on the population in rural areas visited. Totals of 10,000 people reached during a visit were not uncommon in reports and “enormous enthusiasm” for OIAA films was frequently noted.¹⁶³

OIAA resources also reached rural areas of Colombia as a result of OIAA collaboration with US businesses. Traveling salesmen and repair technicians employed by US agricultural equipment, sewing machine, and beverage companies often volunteered to distribute OIAA print propaganda on their rural routes. Some agreed to carry portable projection equipment and to screen OIAA films. In Colombia, the Sydney Ross Company projected OIAA films to over 800,000 rural viewers in the course of the war. This was 15% of the total OIAA film audience.¹⁶⁴ In addition, Sydney Ross salesmen were also responsible for distributing 40% of all OIAA’s pamphlets and posters in Colombia.¹⁶⁵ A subsidiary of Sterling Drug, Inc., Sydney Ross was then engaged in an aggressive campaign to capture Latin American markets that had been controlled by a German pharmaceutical competitor before the war.¹⁶⁶ Before the OIAA began to supply films to the company, Sydney Ross had already been screening films in small villages as

¹⁶² Minutes of the 11th Regular Meeting of the Barranquilla Regional Committee, 18 Oct. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Barranquilla, 1943.

¹⁶³ Bernardo Mahe R. to Coordination Committee, 20 Oct. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Reports, B1372. F: Solicita de Peliculas.

¹⁶⁴ Rankin, “CI-AA Statistical Report.”

¹⁶⁵ Rankin, “Narrative Report on Press Operations in Colombia.”

¹⁶⁶ US Sterling gained the assets of German Bayer during WWI. After the war, the two companies agreed to respect each others’ markets in Latin America. Nazism brought an end to their arrangement. “Advertising News,” *NYT*, 22 Aug. 1944.

a marketing scheme to extend its brand recognition. In Latin America it had eighty delivery trucks outfitted with sound and projection equipment for this purpose. In Colombia it had eight sound trucks as well as a delivery boat that traveled along the Magdalena and Cauca Rivers projecting entertaining films at town docks.¹⁶⁷ Because Sydney Ross traveled to remote places where even Escuelas Ambulantes did not reach, the OIAA considered it an especially valued partner in its information and propaganda programs.¹⁶⁸ Notably, Sydney Ross and other business collaborators were not as concerned with screening educational films as the Colombian educators and cultural managers with whom they shared the OIAA resources. The objective of product marketing was simply to attract and entertain crowds, and Sydney Ross employees considered many of the OIAA educational films too dry and boring for its audiences. They preferred to show US cartoons and sports films for that reason. To the extent that war-time propaganda films were exciting to watch, they were acceptable, but Sydney Ross reports indicated that many did not hold the audience. Company salesmen strongly suggested propaganda cartoons as the best match of corporate interests and OIAA objectives. Cartoon characters, they reported, were “almost always received with wild enthusiasm by small town, country, and Indian audiences.”¹⁶⁹ However, rural illiterate audiences were by no means the only demographic that responded enthusiastically to cartoons. Throughout urban Colombia, they were popular with school children, teachers and many adults. In response to the genre’s wide appeal, the OIAA contracted with Walt

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Forney Rankin to Ambassador John C. Wiley, 5 Jan. 1945, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1378, F: Reports 1945.

¹⁶⁹ David Richardson to Nelson Rockefeller, 17 Nov. 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Motion Pictures, B1371, F: 1942.

Disney to produce a series of films with educational and propaganda content for both theatrical and non-theatrical distribution.¹⁷⁰

Requests for Screenings

As propaganda content increasingly defined the catalogs of the film program, OIAA representatives in Washington identified government officials, business leaders and middle-class professionals as “specialized groups” that coordination committees should target. The explicit intent was winning over these influential sectors to the Pan American approach while simultaneously building support for the Allies and eliminating Axis influence. From the perspective of the OIAA representatives in Washington, however, the initial Colombian program was developing too broadly. They complained that too many screenings were missing the target audiences because they focused on school kids, older students, soldiers, and church groups.¹⁷¹ Preference among Colombian coordination committees for cultural over propaganda activities was one important reason for this deviation from official intent, but just as important was the role of Colombians in structuring the program. As articulated above, the objectives of education leaders at the national and regional levels significantly conditioned how OIAA film resources were disbursed. The very audiences Washington policy makers were complaining about had been identified by the Ministry of National Education as targets for its educational cinema program; these were the groups within which the ministry hoped “educational seeds” would be planted via film. At the same time, the program was also driven by requests for film that poured into committee offices from various social sectors. Such

¹⁷⁰ J. B. Kaufman, *South of the Border with Disney: Walt Disney and the Good Neighbor Program, 1941-1948* (New York: Disney Editions, 2009).

¹⁷¹ John Hay Whitney to Robert Parrish, 14 May 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Motion Pictures, B1371, F: 1942.

requests --made in writing, by telephone, and in person-- provide important insights into the variety of intentions that further structured program development in Colombia during the war.

The majority of requests for film came from schools: public and private, Catholic and Protestant, primary, secondary, and technical as well as university level. Resource poor schools made it clear that they were happy to get any films. Thus, many requests simply and broadly asked for educational and cultural subjects. Other requests were more specific: Jesuit academics wanted science films for their university classrooms; Bogotá's well-regarded Presbyterian colegio wanted to review the current catalog so teachers could plan film-based curriculum units; and educators commonly requested films on geography.¹⁷² Importantly, school requests always exceeded the ability to meet them. For the limited number of schools that owned projectors, it was easy to loan films. Yet when an OIAA projectionist was required, the problem of finding adequately darkened facilities was always a problem. Sometimes, collaboration with local businesses provided solutions for schools. In Medellín, a member of the coordination committee was the owner of several local cinemas; he allowed schools to use his theaters during normally inactive morning hours.¹⁷³ In Barranquilla, businessmen from the civic improvement society offered a large room in their headquarters for school screenings.¹⁷⁴ Notably, schools frequently asked for cartoon and sports films because they were popular with

¹⁷² Carlos Ortiz Restrepo, S.J. to Film Section, Coordination Committee, 15 Dec. 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Reports, B1372, F: Solicita de Peliculas. In the same box/folder: Roberto Waggoner, Colegio Americano for Boys, to Head of the Film Section, 30 Mar. 1943; Gonzalo Combariza M., Ministerio de Gobierno, to Servicio Cooperativo Interamericano, 24 Aug. 1943.

¹⁷³ Minutes of the Medellín Sub-Committee, 21 May 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín.

¹⁷⁴ Rankin, "Colombian Cooperation with the Coordination Committee for Colombia."

students and they varied the tone of more serious educational reels.¹⁷⁵ Similar requests for entertaining films also came from the army. Historically, the German military model had been most influential in Colombia, so coordination committees and embassy officials were very enthusiastic about obliging such requests. They regularly loaned films from the “Power to Win” series. However, while commanders at barracks and training facilities always expressed appreciation for war films, they also asked for more entertaining subjects, especially sports and cartoons. OIAA war films were appealing because they modeled military modernity, but, clearly, films were also desirable as spectacle for soldiers who were restricted to military campuses.¹⁷⁶

Though the barrio film program reached the working class in their neighborhoods, laborers also viewed OIAA films during the work day. Throughout the war years, coordination committees met requests for screenings at factories and job sites. Like most OIAA films those screened for labor had variably educational, cultural, and propaganda content. Many presented US industrial and labor models, and many business owners and managers requested them because such films projected visions of economic modernity. Industrialists chose films on modern production to show at the start of shifts, textile workers saw films on modern fashion so as to connect production and consumption, and mining techniques and safety films were the chosen by owners of salt mines.¹⁷⁷ Most

¹⁷⁵ Barranquilla Coordination Committee to Bogotá Coordination Committee, 14 June 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Barranquilla, 1943; Instituto de la Salle to Sr. Venegas, 22 Sep. 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Reports, B1372, F: Solicita de Peliculas; Combariza M. to Servicio Cooperativo Interamericano, 24 Aug. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Reports, B1372, F: Solicita de Peliculas; Barranquilla Coordination Committee to Bogotá Coordination Committee, 14 June 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Barranquilla, 1943.

¹⁷⁶ Rankin, “Colombian Cooperation with the Coordination Committee for Colombia”; Jaime Carrizosa to Luis G. González, 13 Jan. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Reports, B1372. F: Solicita de Peliculas. In same box/folder: Humberto Puccetti to Luis G. González, 6 Jan. 1943.

¹⁷⁷ José Miguel Lizarride, Sección Industrial/MEN to MRREE, 4 Jan. 1941, “Correspondence con el MEN: 1940-41,” 705/92/39, AMRE, Sección Primera AGN; Administrator of Gasoesa Colombianas to Coordination Committee, 6 Dec. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Reports, B1372. F: Solicita de Peliculas;

requests for screenings at work sites came from Medellín. Their management approaches to labor were infused with Catholic paternalism and conditioned by a strong anticommunist cautiousness. Concerned that film content precisely match their objectives, Medellín business owners often visited the coordination committee office to screen films before they were shown to their work forces.¹⁷⁸ As seen in the case of OIAA English teaching projects in the city, the film program in Medellín had a decidedly business orientation. When the month-long Medellín Industrial Exposition was held in warehouses of the coffee growers' federation in 1943, organizers featured OIAA films. The oil industry, diesel fuels, engine lubrication, electron technology, and bridge building were film subjects chosen by organizers. Because the films were in English without subtitles, a Spanish translation was read by microphone from a script prepared by the OIAA. The scripts deviated from the original soundtracks slightly in that they referenced local context and injected anti-Axis commentary.¹⁷⁹

Finally, requests for OIAA films also came from many who explicitly expressed political solidarity with the Allied cause or publicly embraced US-led Pan Americanism. Concerned with the chaos of the Old Continent, anti-Fascists political groups, European diplomats exiled from their occupied homelands, Colombian Francophones horrified by the Nazi occupation of Paris, and activists who identified with the fight “to conserve the

Andrew Donovan to Harold Colvocoresses, 15 June 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Motion Pictures, B1371, F: January 2, 1943 to June 30, 1943; Harold Colvocoresses to Nelson Rockefeller, 13 Mar. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Motion Pictures, B1371, F: January 2, 1943 to June 30, 1943; Minutes of the Medellín Sub-Committee, 19 May 1942, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín; Vernon Fluharty, American Vice Consul/Medellín, to Harold Colvocoresses, 7 Jan. 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín.

¹⁷⁸ Minutes of the Medellín Sub-Committee, 29 Nov. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín.

¹⁷⁹ Harold Colvocoresses to P.C. Collins, 22 Dec. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín; “Cosechas para combate” (Spanish language script for films), NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín.

democratic principles of the world” asked for films to maintain political support.¹⁸⁰

Invoking the rhetoric of mutual understanding, politicians at the local level requested OIAA films to engage their own political bases. Letters of request from mayors of small towns across the nation asked, sometimes pleaded, for films and projection equipment to arrive. Many expressed interest in providing educational and cultural experiences for their constituents. Others sought direct propaganda. Some were clear that purely entertaining films would meet their needs.¹⁸¹ As Seth Fein has shown for the Mexican case in the postwar period, US government film resources were as adaptable to the projects of regional and local politicians as they were to national and transnational programs orchestrated by diplomats and ministers of government.¹⁸² In the 1940s and well beyond, free film showings in Colombia were a novelty that drew sizeable crowds to plazas. Local leaders who could tap into the film distribution networks of OIAA’s coordination committees could frame the projections to their own intent.

Conclusion

Ben Cherrington has argued that line between cultural and propaganda content in US cultural diplomacy was blurred by the strains of world war. While OIAA activities in the first half of the 1940s bear out his point, it is also clear that the line is never precise

¹⁸⁰ Harold Colvocoresses to Don Arnaldo Maury Castro, 9 Apr. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1357, F: Barranquilla, 1943; Legation of Belgium to Coordination Committee, 20 Nov. 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Reports, B1372, F: Solicita de Peliculas. Quote is from Manuel José Cárdenas to Members of the Coordination Committee /Film Section, 9 July 1943, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Reports, B1372, F: Solicita de Peliculas.

¹⁸¹ Eusebio Mora Ruiz, Festival President, to Mr. Gragory Willianson (sic), 31 Dec. 1945, NARG 229, DI/CCC, Reports, B1372, F: Solicita de Peliculas. In the same box/folder see: Francisco Pineda Otero to Luis G. González, 15 July 1943; Resolución del Consejo de Bochalema, 29 Dec. 1945; Mayor, Town of Soacha, to Film Operator, 17 Oct. 1944; Senator Benjamín Salamanca, Colombian Senate, to Luis G. González A, 18 Nov. 1942. See also: Peter Collins to Forney Rankin, 10 Oct. 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1369, F: Medellín.

¹⁸² Seth Fein, “Everyday Forms of Transnational Collaboration: US Film Propaganda in Cold War Mexico,” in *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of US-Latin American Relations*, pp. 400-450.

and is even blurry under the strains of peace. In formulating foreign policy and building international relations, nations act in their own interest. They aim to benefit their own position vis-à-vis other nations, and this reality informs policies and programming. Beginning in the 1930s, when Washington funded elaborate Pan American programs and focused on mutual understanding, its intention was to change the dynamic of Latin America-US relations. It was not looking to surrender its military nor economic hegemony in the region but to minimize potential for conflicts. Since the turn of the century, interventionist shows of force and full military occupations had not worked to bring political and economic stability to the region. World War II was a glaring example of the disastrous course international rivalries and resentments could take. Thus did FDR emphasize collaborative engagement in the hemisphere under US leadership. Ideologically diffusionist from the start, his Pan American program intended to convince Latin America of the benefits of the US, rather than European, model of modernity.

Significantly, when the OIAA mass media programs are examined in the local Colombian context, the extent to which local intent conditioned implementation is drawn into focus. On the national level, OIAA collaboration with the Colombian government was facilitated by common interests in securing regional peace and building the infrastructure for hemispheric modernity. Though partisan conflict could flare over specific diplomatic policies, elite politicians from both parties had come to terms with US leadership well before the war. While historically resistant to US cultural influences and more comfortable with European tradition, some elite had begun to see the US as a model of modernity worthy of emulation. In the economic sphere, the trend had building since the since the 1920s; in the 1930s, as consensus built around education reform, elite

leadership began to look to the US as an educational model as well. European educational models had not worked for the majority of Colombians. Thus, as US resources were made available through the OIAA, government officials in Bogotá employed them selectively in support of educational and cultural reforms.

European, Catholic and exclusive, the educational system in Colombia was inadequate, and a lack of schools and educational programs was an impediment to national unity and development. The Ministry of National Education experimented with solutions, but the burden of building new classrooms and programs fell most directly at the local level. Departmental educational bureaucracies proved most enthusiastic about engaging OIAA resources, but so did civic organizations, educators and students, church groups, the military, professional communities, and other individuals. As Colombians refashioned OIAA resources to meet local needs, they added a variety of filters that conditioned the original intent associated with the media products. Many, including domestic and foreign businesses, used OIAA resources to their own economic and political advantage. Yet what remains most evident is that many Colombians engaged with OIAA mass media programs because of the scarcity of educational resources in their communities. Through OIAA mass media, new and alternative educational options reached across borders, class and region; in the process, new transnational connections, networks and communities informed evolving Colombian-US cultural relations.

Chapter Seven

Transnational Education and Culture in the Early Cold War

This chapter analyzes the intersection of anticommunism and cultural diplomacy by tracking the evolution of American schools, binational cultural centers, and mass media programming in Colombia during the first half of the Cold War. Anticommunism was a well-funded political imperative in the US and it fueled increased spending on cultural diplomacy and information programming in the 1950s and 1960s. That the philosophy was shared among many US and Colombian political, economic and cultural leaders energized existing US-sponsored programs in urban centers throughout the South American nation. The chapter treats the Cold War as a political process and articulates the growth of transnational educational and cultural infrastructure in response to both anticommunist and local intent. It demonstrates continuing enthusiasm among urban Colombians from the middle, professional and upper classes for US educational and cultural models and resources. This was a sharp contrast to the previous generation when the transnational influences on Colombian education and culture had been more exclusively European, traditionally Catholic, and decidedly elite.

The Cold War was common political ground for the US and Colombian governments, and their political and military collaboration impacted American schools, cultural centers, and media programs. Existing American schools at Barranquilla and Bogotá were joined by four more in the two decades after the war: Medellín (1946), Cali (1948), Cartagena (1952), and Bucaramanga (1963). Others followed. US-sponsored binational centers also proliferated. Following the establishment of the Colombo-

Americano de Bogotá, independent, sister institutions were founded at Medellín (1947), Cali (1954), Barranquilla (1956), Cartagena (1957) and Bucaramanga (1957). Additional Colombo-Americans later appeared in the coffee region at Manizales, Pereira, and Armenia. During the same period, the mass media programs of the US government in Colombia also intensified. Film, radio, and print media were used in a global propaganda campaign aimed at discrediting communism and presenting a US-led capitalist alternative.

Colombian-US political collaboration was extensive during the Cold War, and this chapter examines its impact on schools, cultural centers, and mass media programming. It begins with a brief overview of converging Colombian and US political agendas during the first half of the Cold War and contextualizes Colombian and US efforts to contain radicalism during two decades of extreme violence and social unrest. The next section, placing emphasis on film, considers the extent to which Cold War imperatives infused US mass media programming. The final two sections analyze how existing Andean schools and BNCs at Medellín and Bogotá together with their Caribbean counterparts at Barranquilla and Cartagena responded to and grew with the politics of the anticommunism.

Violence, Fear and Modernity in Colombia

Colombia, like many places in Latin America, experienced a brief period of electoral growth during and after World War II. As domestic modernization agendas and the war abroad forced important changes to national economies, political systems and social structures, most countries in the hemisphere recorded increased voter participation among sectors historically removed from politics. The flourish of democratic rhetoric in

wartime political discourse certainly supported a climate that was favorable for this development. Yet accelerating rates of urbanization, rising incomes, and higher education levels were most significant toward facilitating new political activism and emerging electoral constituencies. In Colombia as elsewhere, however, the “democratic spring” was quickly squashed. Frightened by the radical potential of emerging voter bases and empowered by the developing force of Cold War anticommunism, entrenched elites quickly contained the potential of their broadening electorates and turned to non-democratic governance and especially dictatorship.¹ In Colombia, the first post-war decade was marked by declared states of siege, closures of the national congress, and eventually a brief dictatorship. Significantly, it also marked the start of a renewed government campaign against communism and a strengthened Colombian-US political alliance.

In Colombia, a brutal period of violence that claimed hundreds of thousands of civilian lives began in the middle of the 1940s. The phenomenon known as *la Violencia* encompassed distinct phases. It has been periodized in a variety of ways, but it had defined geographic trajectories between 1946-1966. It was rural rather than urban and Andean rather than coastal. While this violence manifested the confrontational patterns of national partisanship, it was fully grounded in local tension, resentment, and competition. Partisanship was a catalyst, and as violentologists have shown in regional studies, it was frequently just a veneer that masked complex local conflict. Cultural clashes provoked by migrations from rural zones to cities and to new settlement frontiers contributed to the developing chaos, and criminal opportunists played a bloody role as well. In this conflict,

¹ Leslie Bethel and Ian Roxborough, eds., *Latin America between the Second World War and the Cold War: 1944-1948* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

guerilla movements formed that carried violence in new directions and into a new century.²

Scapegoating communism for the violence of the late 1940s, Conservatives, who had regained the presidency in 1946, severed relations with the Soviet Union and forced the closing of the then active Instituto Cultural Colombo-Soviético in Bogotá. Joining the UN forces on the Korean peninsula shortly thereafter, Colombia established cold warrior credentials that cemented an already collaborative relationship with Washington. Yet, while sending troops abroad to contain Soviet aggression, Conservatives failed to contain violence at home. Blaming communism for broad domestic disorder became increasingly difficult to sustain. By 1953, Conservatives dissatisfied with ongoing disorder sanctioned a bloodless military coup against their own president. In the long run, neither the Conservative nor the Liberal elite proved willing to tolerate dictatorship because it circumvented their traditional authority. Thus, as peacefully as it had been established, the coup was reversed by an agreement of the two parties in 1957. By 1958, the parties had established the *Frente Nacional* [National Front], an agreement under which the nation returned to electoral politics but within a narrow range of predetermined outcomes. Presidential elections were held, but terms officially alternated between the parties. Balloting was also structured to achieve bipartisan parity in Congress and in the

² Palacios, *Between Legitimacy and Violence*, pp. 135-146; Safford and Palacios, *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society*, pp. 345-354. Studies of *La Violencia* and Colombian violence more broadly spawned a sub-field of academic research. See for example: Gonzalo Sánchez, *Los Días de la Revolución: Gaitanismo y el 9 de abril en provincial* (Bogotá: Centro Cultural Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, 1983); Pécaut, *Orden y violencia: Colombia 1930-1954*; Charles Bergquist and Ricardo Peñaranda, eds., *Violence in Colombia: The Contemporary Crisis in Historical Perspective* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1992); Roldán, *Blood and Fire*.

elective bodies of the departments. The agreement fully determined the structure of Colombian politics through the 1970s and its effects still linger to this day.³

Proponents celebrated the arrangement as a noble effort to end violence and foster national unity, but the compromise also secured a high degree of elite control of the political system for decades to come. It also ensured continuing and better coordinated engagement with the post-war development programming offered by the US, UN and Organization of American States (OAS). The National Front actively engaged the financial infrastructure of international capitalism --the World Bank, Export-Import Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, UN Economic Commission in Latin America, and the International Monetary Fund. While economic projects were the immediate focus of National Front leaders, they also acknowledged the nation's stark social inequalities. Gradually, the National Front followed the lead of the Church in searching for moderate social solutions to calm the volatile social climates that sustained violence, encouraged radicalism, and blocked modernity. By the start of the 1960s, the US joined the search for social solutions in Colombia and throughout Latin America.

The Cuban Revolution convinced Washington that it had underestimated Latin America's vulnerability to communism and overestimated the ability of local governments and military dictatorships to contain it. Driven by determination not to lose another nation in the hemisphere to communism, the Kennedy administration declared its commitment to assisting Latin America with necessary social, economic, and political

³ In a recent analysis of the early National Front era, Robert Karl emphasizes that high levels of optimism prevailed in Colombia in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Politicians, armed factions, and the public willingly engaged with National Front's reforms, which aimed for peaceful solutions to *la Violencia* and sustainable national progress. He challenges scholars who cynically dismiss this optimism based on an end result: resurgence of violence and guerilla warfare in the mid-1960s. Karl's provides a detailed treatment of US/Colombia political and military collaboration during this period. Robert Alexander Karl, "State Formation, Violence and Cold War in Colombia, 1957-1966" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2009).

reforms. The administration's programs were constructed around contemporary development theories that privileged local decision making but still saw progress arriving via North-to-South diffusion. Under the loose banner of the Alliance for Progress, long term planning and community development became the new foci of US diplomatic energies in the region. Participating nations formulated elaborate plans for social reform and submitted them for review to a panel of experts. While the US role was coordinating technical assistance and financing, the nations themselves were expected to fund 80% of their programs. Addressing basic human needs was a priority of the Alliance, and clean water, health and housing projects were the most common activity. Land reforms, public works, literacy campaigns and educational infrastructure were also popular projects. To sustain community development after the building of schools, hospitals, and drainage systems, alliance programs also concentrated on building local financial structures to extend credit and guide capitalist modernity.⁴ Colombia's National Front embraced the Alliance for Progress and allowed the nation to be a showcase for the program.

Education, Anticommunism and Community Development

By the 1960s, Colombia had made clear progress in educating its citizenry. National education was now more expansive and more diverse than it has been three decades earlier. Literacy gains were one indicator of progress. In 1938, just over 50% of Colombians (of school age or older) were literate, but by 1964 the figure had risen to almost 70%. Urban areas with a literacy rate of 86% recorded greater success than rural zones where the rate was just 59%, but both gains were significant. Importantly, primary schooling had been extended to a majority of children in the nation. Hidden, however, in

⁴ J. Warren Nystrom and Nathan A. Haverstock, *The Alliance for Progress* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1963); William Manger, ed., *The Alliance for Progress: A Critical Appraisal* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1963).

the improving literacy rates and increased number of primary classrooms was Colombia's more limited success with secondary education. That same year, only 11% of those completing primary school programs were enrolled in secondary programs. Of those who did enroll, approximately half completed just two years or less. Just 1.2% of those who received instruction in Colombian schools made it to university.⁵

While government literacy and school expansion campaigns continued in the first half of the Cold War, new agricultural, commercial, technical and professional education programs brought diversity to the national education system by the 1960s.⁶ As many Colombian students continued to seek educational opportunities abroad, Conservative leaders and industrialists collaborated to more precisely co-opt foreign resources toward their national development goals. With creation of ICETEX [the Institute of Technical Specialization Abroad] in the early 1950s, the government took a lead role in sending students abroad for training. The organization identified national training needs in technical areas, selected candidates, found spaces in educational programs abroad, and, importantly, provided government loans for students. By the late 1950s, ICETEX annually sent hundreds of Colombians abroad for technical training, and it enrolled half of the participants in programs in the US.⁷ Simultaneously, efforts to develop domestic training programs eventually led to the creation of the Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje [National Apprenticeship Service or SENA] in 1957. Through SENA, the government

⁵ "Distribución de los habitantes, por secciones del país, según la instrucción," Cuadro 51, *Censo General de Población: 5 de Julio de 1938*, p. 127; "Población por nivel de instrucción y años aprobados, según grupos de edad, sexo, cabeceras y resto de los municipios," No. 22, *XIII Censo Nacional de Población –15 de Julio 1964*, p. 86; "Población de 7 años y más por grupos de edad, cabeceras y resto de los municipios, según sexo, alfabetismo y secciones del país," *XIII Censo Nacional de Población –15 de Julio 1964*, p. 74.

⁶ Gabriel Paéz Reyna and Armando Moreno Mattos, *La Educación en Colombia, 1963-1964* (Bogotá: DANE, 1966); *Censo de Establecimientos educativos 1968* (Bogotá: DANE, 1969).

⁷ ICETEX, *ICETEX: Un Instrumento para el Desarrollo integral de Colombia: 1950-1965 - Sus Perspectivas: 1966-1968* (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1966); Helg, *La Educación en Colombia*, pp. 231-232.

began to rely more heavily on domestic industry to provide commercial and industrial education and training for the laboring classes.⁸

Education and training programs were crucial to elite visions of modernity, but alone they did not resolve the civil discord that continued feeding horrific cycles of violence. Moreover, these programs did little to reduce elite concerns over the vulnerability of impoverished Colombians to communism. The Catholic Church, not the government, took the initial role in this fight. Pronounced concerns over communism had been a fixture of Church discourse since the Russian Revolution, but in the 1930s increasing communist organizing in Colombia intensified Church fears. With decreased influence over government policy as well as the nation's classrooms, the Church sought new bases of authority for exerting its influence over the processes of modernization. Encouraged by the Vatican's evolving social doctrines, Catholic leaders turned to social and labor organizing. Through lay organizations and Catholic labor unions, activists within the Church experimented with Catholic solutions to violence and modernity. Successes and failures of these programs aside, it is clear that Catholic Church activism from the 1930s forward targeted communism as an enemy.

Scared by ongoing violence and intent on containing radicalism, National Front politicians in the late 1950s began to echo Church concerns and engage in a more meaningful search for social solutions.⁹ In line with community development theories of the era that promoted community empowerment and local decision-making, *Acción Comunal* [Community Action] emerged as the National Front's most significant early

⁸ SENA, *SENA: organización, funcionamiento, modos de formación* (Bogotá: SENA, 1973); Emmanuel Jiménez, Bernardo Kugler and Robin Horn, "National In-Service Training in Latin America: An Economic Evaluation of Colombia's SENA," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 37, no. 3 (April 1989), pp. 595-610.

⁹ Ronald Lee Hart, "*The Colombian Acción Comunal Program: A Political Evaluation*" (Ph. D. diss., University of California/Los Angeles, 1974), pp. 194-198.

effort at social reform. The Acción Comunal program funded the formation of local boards across the nation in an attempt to engage poor urban and rural communities in solutions and planning.¹⁰ While less than one-hundred communities participated in the program before 1960, there were 15,070 community boards by 1969. Indicative of still growing demand for educational services in the 1960s, school construction accounted for more than 40% of Acción Comunal activities in that decade. Other typical projects included building latrines, roads, bridges, and housing. Constructing orphanages, telephone systems, slaughter houses, health centers, school cafeterias, parks, sports clubs, and theatres were popular community projects as well.¹¹

Acción Comunal reflected mid-century technocratic approaches to governance and reform, and it specifically relied on community development models then in vogue with the UN, US, other foreign governments, and international organizations.¹² Acción Comunal became a favored site for US-Colombian development programs because it provided a network for accessing the “vulnerable” communities who frightened Cold War planners. The program rested on the goal of engaging communities in their own improvement and making them collaborators with rather than adversaries of government. It modeled a new relationship between citizen and central state that, though remaining paternalistic, was initially a sharp contrast to traditional clientelism. Collaboratively and separately, US and Colombian development programs also emphasized building the middle class as the essential foundation of stable democracy. The dominant development discourse of the early Cold War placed significant responsibility for reforms on the

¹⁰ Humberto Triana y Antorveza, *La Acción Comunal en Colombia: Resultados de una evaluación en 107 municipios* (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1970), pp. 16-24.

¹¹ Hart, “*The Colombian Acción Comunal Program*,” pp. 209-211.

¹² These community development models had evolved within US reorientation programs in post-war Europe but also drew from the British colonial experience as well. See López, “A Beautiful Class, an Irresistible Democracy,” pp. 36-38.

middle class and, as Abel López argues for the Colombian case, this included the task of reformulating elite expectations. Education and training programs proliferated in the nation in the 1950s and 1960s as transnational development programs gathered educated and professional groups into a middle class that could take on the task. Through such education and training, the Colombian middle class would gain technical expertise to guide the nation toward modernity. As it did, this emerging class would play a crucial role in mediating social relations. It would sympathize with, advocate for, and empower the masses as it sought to change elite social attitudes.¹³

Cold War Culture: Evolution of US Cultural and Informational Programs

When the OIAA was officially dissolved in 1945 and its volunteer coordination committees disbanded, US attention to Latin America decreased. Washington's focus shifted to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Europe. Support programs for schools and cultural centers continued in the State Department while popular film and radio programs moved into embassies and consulates around the globe. As the transition to Cold War unfolded, the information/propaganda strain of cultural diplomacy exerted increasing influence within foreign policy bureaucracies. Advocates of cultural/educational approaches still retained influence among policymakers and members of Congress, as the Fulbright Act of 1946 (and subsequent acts that expanded exchange programs) indicated. However, the rapidly developing Cold War energized a search for effective information and propaganda programs that could challenge Soviet influence. Harry Truman settled on the "Full and Fair" approach to propaganda shortly after the war in 1946. The goal, he asserted, was not...

¹³ Ibid., pp. 47-55.

*to outstrip the extensive and growing information programs of the other nations. Rather, it will endeavor to see to it that other peoples receive a full and fair picture of American life and of the aims and policies of the United States Government.*¹⁴

At this early phase, Truman charged mass media programmers with presenting the virtues of the US and its diverse culture to the world. Quickly, however, pressure mounted for a more aggressive campaign to correct Soviet propaganda and expose Soviet vice. As the Full and Fair approach transitioned to explicit anticommunism, it was rebranded by Truman as the “Campaign of Truth.” Significantly, as Nicholas J. Cull explains, under the new directive US information programming became a sales pitch. As far as mass media programming was concerned, mutual understanding as a policy principle gave way to the imperative of understanding the US.¹⁵

The Campaign of Truth gave new life to US mass media information programs in Latin America and around the globe: a 300% increase in US film production and the printing of more than one hundred million propaganda pamphlets and other print materials. Radio operations were centralized in the Voice of America which was then broadcasting across the globe.¹⁶ Because the State Department was struggling to balance cultural and informational approaches within diplomacy, a new government propaganda agency was created. The United States Information Agency (USIA) was established in 1953 to combat international communism through mass media programming.

In addition to running Washington’s information program, the USIA was also assigned responsibility for binational cultural centers. Like the State Department before

¹⁴ US Department Of State, *America – “A Full and Fair Picture”*: *The Government’s Information and Cultural Relations Program Overseas* (Washington: State Department - Office of Public Affairs, 1946), NARG 306, B186, F: Cultural Cooperation Program, 1946.

¹⁵ Nicholas J. Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 486-493.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

it, the USIA had quickly recognized the value of BNCs as accessible sites for engaging a pro-democracy discourse, distributing propaganda materials, and developing goodwill through cultural reciprocity. The agency enthusiastically continued US support for the centers through salary grants for US directors and some US teachers, programming resources, and the funding of capital expansion. The agency supported the organizational model and even began to fund new BNCs in Colombia, Latin America and across the globe. Yet toward its anticommunist policy objectives, the USIA began to rely more heavily on a different institutional model, US information centers.

Information centers were first established by the Office of War Information in the early 1940s and were significantly expanded by the State Department in the immediate post-war years. The centers functioned around a small library that carried US books, serials, pamphlets, government documents, and film. In Germany, Italy, and Japan, the centers were important support structures for post-war reorientation programs. They promoted international democracy and capitalism based upon a US model. These libraries were staffed by professional librarians, who did not consider themselves propagandists and tried to maintain some level of balance on the shelves; yet their mission was a narrow one –to provide information about the US and US-led capitalism. By 1953, when the USIA assumed control over these centers they numbered more than 100. Appreciating the direct control these centers offered the agency in contrast to the BNC model, the USIA quickly doubled the number of centers around the world. In Latin America, however, the BNC model remained dominant. Few information centers appeared.¹⁷

¹⁷ Henry James, Jr. "The Role of the Information Library in the United States International Information Program," *The Library Quarterly* 23, no. 2 (April 1953), pp. 84-85; Edith Marie Bjorklund, "Research and Evaluation Programs of the U.S. Information Agency and the Overseas Information-Center Libraries," *The*

American schools, BNCs, and mass media programs in Colombia responded to the transnational development agendas of the Cold War. As detailed below, schools and cultural centers evolved as important, and in some cases necessary, support structures for collaborative US-Colombian development programming. Given that anticommunism was common political ground for the US and Colombia, Cold War propaganda was never far removed from programming in schools or BNCs. Both institutions engaged educational and cultural resources of US and Colombian origins that projected varying degrees of anticommunism in program content: in subtleties of US and Colombian elementary level history texts and the not so subtle analyses of their respective high school versions; in the themes of graduation speakers and arguments posed in lecture series; in the films that were projected on plazas and in factories; and in the books that librarians chose for their shelves. Because these institutions remained committed to cultural reciprocity and mutual understanding, and because fighting the Cold War was common ground, anticommunism was well embedded in their community cultures.

Anticommunism was also the vehicle through which crucial capital expansion funding (for new buildings, campuses, property and plant) and grants for academic and professional development were offered by the US. In the 1950s and 1960s, State Department aid allowed small and often struggling schools to establish credible academic programs and strong identities within their communities. Similar funding for BNCs allowed them to grow with the increasing demand for English language instruction and to develop new educational and cultural programs to meet local demand. As American schools and Centros Colombo-Americanos adapted and grew with the Cold War,

participants in these education and cultural communities used Cold War resources to build and strengthen educational infrastructure linking the two nations.

The new foreign policy imperative directly impacted post-war mass media programming as well. By the mid-1950s, USIA mass media programming was as sophisticated as that of the Soviets. Film, radio, and print media was focused around messages of anticommunist persuasion. In Colombia, where Church and national leaders were suspicious of the laboring classes and university students, US mass media programs specifically targeted these groups.

In Colombia, the USIS (as the USIA was known abroad) had a central office in Bogotá with branches in consulates in Medellín, Barranquilla, and Cali.¹⁸ The office supported the US embassy's overall objective of containing communism and supporting the growth of international capitalism. It also developed more specific objectives for its own information programs. In the early 1960s in aftermath of the Cuban Revolution, for example, the USIS office in Bogotá had three objectives: building support for the Alliance for the Progress, reducing the "influence and appeal of Communism and other hostile efforts," and persuading Colombian elites to support social and economic reforms.¹⁹ Persuasion was the basic mission of the USIA, and it employed mid-century information science to sharpen its messages. Its research division used public opinion surveys extensively to better understand the sentiments of foreign populations and plan information activities accordingly.

¹⁸ In this and subsequent references, when the name USIS is used, it refers specifically to the local USIA operation based in Bogotá. When USIA is used, it refers to the broader agency based in Washington.

¹⁹ "USIA Inspection Report: USIS Colombia," 22 June 1962, NARG 306, Inspection Reports and Related Records:1954-1962, B2, F: Colombia: Oct 27, 1959- June 22, 1962.

In the mid-1950s, USIA surveys of Colombian public opinion revealed largely positive perceptions of the United States. In a broad survey of 1,500 Colombians conducted for the agency by a Bogotá company, approximately 77% of respondents had a good or very good opinion about the United States. The rate far exceeded percentages for Britain and Spain as well as dismal percentages recorded for the USSR and “Communist” China.²⁰ On specific cultural questions, approximately a quarter of the respondents acknowledged that they did not know enough about US and other foreign cultures to rate them. Still, the majority offered consistently high opinions of the US: 65% favorability for the US political system, 70% for its standard of living, and 75% as model of technology and industrial development. While only 40% had a favorable opinion of religious life in the US, it is noteworthy that only 5% held a “bad” or “very bad” opinion.²¹ Asked to rate US culture (defined as art, music, and literature), 71% of respondents had a very good or good opinion as compared to 18% for the USSR, 58% France, 52% Spain, and only 50% for Colombia itself.²² Positive perceptions of culture, however, did not necessarily translate to an embrace of US foreign policies. When asked if the US government tried to dominate world affairs too much, 47% said yes and just 32% said no. When that same question was asked about the Soviet Union, however, 70% responded in the affirmative and only 4% in the negative.²³ Results were skewed toward the urban middle and upper classes. The favorable results were great news for the agency.

²⁰ Combined responses of “good” and “very good” accounted for 56%, 50%, 11%, and 4.3% respectively for those four nations. “Colombia General Attitudes Survey,” 31 May 1956, NARG 306 (306/250/67/10/1), Office of Research, Country Project Files: 1953-56, B21, F: Colombia: General Attitudes (LA4), Sept. 1956, pp. 6-7.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Propaganda and Information on Film

US film production for cultural and informational programs had declined in the immediate post-war, and by the early 1950s the collection in Colombia was aging. The barrio film program had been moved into regional consulates and was much reduced. In part, this was due to *la Violencia* and the fears it provoked after dark but mostly it was an effect of the region's low priority status in US foreign policy during the early Cold War. Even the Colombo-Americanos in Bogotá and Medellín were using film only sparingly. At that time, the newer films in the collection were products of the Campaign for Truth and focused intently on political tensions along the East-West axis. Such themes, in the opinion of the director of Medellín's Centro Colombo-Americano, had become "monotonous" and of limited interest to his students.²⁴ With the birth of the USIA in 1953, the film program was recharged. In a push to recapture the non-theatrical film audiences of the war era, the USIA rebuilt and diversified the existing film catalog. It purchased new mobile units that allowed the USIS in Colombia to expand the much diminished barrio film program. It also purchased a new line of 16mm projectors that were lent out to target groups for six months at a time.

By the end of the 1950s the non-theatrical film program had been reactivated and had a Colombian audience of more than a million viewers a year. Several times that figure were also reached via newsreels that included weekly USIA news clips projected without ascription in commercial theaters.²⁵ Newsreels aside, audience figures for non-theatrical screening were still much reduced through the 1950s as compared to the OIAA

²⁴ "Quarterly Statement on Cultural Institutes for July-Sept 1952," *Libro de Actas - Centro 1947-1953* (hereafter Actas1/Med.), Office of the Director, Centro Colombo-Americano, Medellín, Colombia (hereafter cited as CCA/Medellín MSS).

²⁵ "USIA Inspection Report: USIS Colombia," 27 Oct. 1959, NARG 306, Inspection Reports and Related Records: 1954-1962, B2, F: Columbia: Oct 27, 1959- June 22, 1962.

program the decade before. Interested in recapturing that audience, the USIS turned to BNCs for assistance; it took specific advantage of the centers' local connections and affiliations to rebuild the program. Along with grants to the Colombo-Americanos to administer and expand the program, film libraries were relocated from consulates to the cultural centers. In-house collections proved a boost to the Colombo-Americanos as educational and cultural cinema became a stronger component of academic and cultural programming from the early 1960s into the next century.

While both the in-house and barrio film programs of the Colombo-Americanos increased audiences, films loaned upon request still provided the majority of viewers.²⁶ With high demand for loans, the USIS office in Bogotá identified the principal targets for screenings as university groups, worker's unions, and barrios of the laboring classes. Under the direction of the various Colombo-Americanos, the audience for non-theatrical film screenings (excluding newsreels) quadrupled between the late 1950s and early 1960s. More than four million Colombians viewed USIA films annually by 1962. The identified target groups were an important segment of the overall viewership, but educational and cultural institutions and organizations still made up important segments of audiences. Figures rivaled those achieved by the OIAA programs in the 1940s, yet program content was much changed since the Rockefeller days. Whereas the original collection of films were framed in the narrative of Pan Americanism, East-West tensions now dominated the center of inter-American relations. Cultural and educational themes continued in abundance, but now they were more directly tied to promoting US-led models of international democracy and capitalism as the alternative to communism.

²⁶ Ibid.

The USIA film collection in Colombia included more than 1,000 titles by the early 1960s. As with the former OIAA program, loans were made upon requests of civil, military, and ecclesiastical authorities. Educators and their institutions, scientific and professional groups, industry and commerce, labor and its unions, private clubs and social service groups were typical requesters. The catalog printed by the USIS office in Bogotá grouped films under a range of categories and provided synopses of content and message. The majority of films could be grouped into the two broader categories: capitalist modernity (emphasizing industry, labor, science and technology) and life in the US (highlighting art, education, sport, civic and community life). Anticommunism was an implicit theme of many of the films that examined US culture or explored the workings of capitalism, but explicit treatments of that Cold War imperative were also featured.²⁷

Titles in the category “Revealing the Communist Menace” constituted just 4% of the catalog, but they were among the most viewed films in Colombia. Films on agriculture, US sports, science, and education were in high demand from the public as well.²⁸ Most commonly, anti-communist films presented the difficulties of life in nations under communist control by contrasting life on either side of the *cortina de hierro* [iron curtain]. In *Now We Are Free*, a Hungarian family escaped communism for freedom in the US. *Orphans in Korea* stressed how communism destroyed families. A variety of films on Tibet, Laos, and Poland did the same, and Cuba was a developing theme. *Unhappy Island*, for example, used edited footage of a JFK press conference to positively

²⁷ Servicio de Información de los Estados Unidos de América (USIS/Bogotá), *USIS Catálogo de Películas* (Bogotá: United States Embassy, 1961).

²⁸ “USIA Inspection Report: USIS Colombia,” 22 June 1962.

spin the Bay of Pigs fiasco. Films on Vietnam were also then starting to appear as the collection followed the geography of East-West tensions.²⁹

Significantly, many of the films treated modern capitalism and were educational in intent. Films explaining the institutions, infrastructure and functioning of the free market economy were made to teach developing countries and newly independent colonies how international capitalism functioned. They were, at the same time, persuasive pieces selling “Democratic Capitalism” based on the US lifestyle. *People’s Capitalism*, for example, documented a 1956 USIS exhibit in Bogotá that walked viewers through the economics of community and family life in the US.³⁰ *Bananas, ¡Si Señor!* [Yes Sir, Bananas!] followed a banana from a tree in the tropics to a breakfast table in the US and emphasized the benefits of this agricultural industry for developing countries.³¹ The more than two dozen films on unionism presented organized and anticommunist laborers as noble citizens who built modernity with their hands; their reward, as the films made clear, was a financially secure, middle-class lifestyle.³²

Some of the films on capitalist modernity took Colombia as subject and treated its petroleum, mineral and agricultural industries. Presidential or ministerial visits to New York, Miami, and Washington were also regular features that emphasized the close US-Colombian economic and political relationship.³³ There were cultural subjects focused on Colombia as well. *Arte Colombiano en los Estados Unidos* [Colombian Art in the United States] documented a critically acclaimed exhibit of Colombian ceramics, sculpture, and

²⁹ *Orphans in Korea* (1953), NARG 306.6114; *Now We Live Free* (1960), NARG 306.5196; *Unhappy Island* (1961), NARG 306.5179; *USIS Catálogo de Películas*, pp. 169-176.

³⁰ *People’s Capitalism* (1956), NARG 306.4768; *USIS Catálogo de Películas*, p. 121.

³¹ *USIS Catálogo de Películas*, p. 12.

³² *USIS Catálogo de Películas*, pp. 135-141.

³³ *USIS Catálogo de Películas*, p. 112.

paintings at the University of Miami.³⁴ Highlighting the centrality of transnational capital to the persuasive mission of the USIA, International Petroleum, a Canadian affiliate of US Standard Oil, had sponsored the exhibit, produced the film, and donated it the agency.

Persuasive techniques in USIA films varied, but the message regarding capitalist modernity as the alternative to communism was always clear. The film industry had matured since the OIAA days, and sophisticated techniques, better editing, and greater use of color gave USIA filmmakers new tools for crafting a message. Some films were still gathered from sources in and out of government, but because the USIA used film to promote specific US foreign policy initiatives the agency contracted for many of them. Eisenhower used film to promote his Atoms for Peace campaign, and JFK used film to showcase achievements of the Alliance for Progress. Colombia was the focus of three films produced for the purpose of celebrating Alliance projects. Acclaimed director James Blue's *A Letter From Colombia* extolled the virtues of land reform and housing developments in the Colombian interior. *Evil Wind Out* focused on medical professionals' successes in overcoming rural Colombian resistance to modern diet, health and hygiene programs.³⁵ And the beautifully filmed *School at Rincon Santo* told the story of a one-room school house built in a remote Andean village. The film celebrated "small victories" of Colombia's Acción Comunal program, and projected it to viewers in Colombia and across the globe as a model of community empowerment. The Alliance for

³⁴ "Capital Will See Art of Colombia," *NYT*, 19 June 1960; *USIS Catálogo de Películas*, p. 35.

³⁵ *Evil Wind Out* (1963), NARG 306.338; *A Letter From Colombia* (1963), NARG 263.2092; Richard Dyer MacCann, "Film and Foreign Policy: The USIA, 1962-67," *Cinema Journal* 9, no. 1 (August 1969), pp. 23-42.

Progress was mentioned just once and this intentionally sent the message that local initiative was the basis of the program.³⁶

James Blue's film about the village school was well received internationally, and even won high profile awards at the international film festivals at Venice, Amsterdam, and Bilbao in 1963. Yet, *The School at Rincon Santo* like other USIA productions was not shown to US audiences. By practice and later by law, US government propaganda films were banned from screening before the US public. The ban was observed in deference to lawmakers concerns over both promoting incumbent presidents and competing with commercial mass media.³⁷ Importantly, this ban marked a very sharp philosophical distinction between the film programs of the USIA during the Cold War and the OIAA during World War II. In Pan American unity campaign in the 1940s, the OIAA not only organized and funded a film program in Latin America, but it ran an expansive reciprocal program in the US. Non-theatrical films, largely documentaries, were pulled from the same catalogs used in Latin America and screened to over 2.5 million US viewers annually at the height of the war. Specific titles were produced to educate the US public about the region and introduce the diversity of its culture. Schools, civic organizations, and Pan American clubs were the sites of most screenings.³⁸ This domestic program focused on educational and cultural themes and the OIAA considered it necessary toward winning public support for its hemispheric unity campaign. Rockefeller was committed to building mutual understanding and understood that it had to be cultivated in the US. Later, during the Cold War, USIA films were produced not

³⁶ *School at Rincon Santo* (1963), NARG 306.5915.

³⁷ Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, p. 40.

³⁸ "Summary of Activities: Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs," 14 Aug. 1944, NARG 229, DI/CCC, B1362, F: Bogotá Correspondence.

around a general principle that privileged educational and cultural exchange (mutual understanding) but around a clear intent to persuade and propagandize. Educational and cultural films remained a strong component of the collection, but now they were more tightly focused on US culture, on an anticommunist message and a broad campaign to sell international capitalism and democracy.

Like film, radio programming was also quite different during the Cold War as compared to the earlier Pan American days. Television was beginning to make a mark in USIA mass media programming around the world and radio received less attention. Now centralized in the Voice of America (VOA) and under USIA authority, local radio productions were now just a minor project for in-country USIS staffers. Across the globe, the VOA competed directly with shortwave broadcasts from European capitals on both sides of the iron curtain, and in Colombia, the USIS reported that the signal of Radio Moscow was “one of the best --if not the best-- received.”³⁹ Modeled on the British Broadcasting Service, the VOA resisted pressure to do heavy political advocacy, and, in part, it was able to do so because the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) took on that task with Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberation and other covertly funded broadcast operations.⁴⁰ VOA broadcasts from Washington aside, the USIA did encourage some local radio programming by USIS offices. In Colombia, for example, its *Let's Learn English* series aired on 16 stations during the 1950s. It also encouraged and funded radio programming by BNCs. The Colombo-Americano in Bogotá developed its own news and cultural program and contracted for air time on local stations. Radio Sutatenza, a Catholic

³⁹ “USIA Inspection Report: USIS Colombia,” 27 Oct. 1959, p. 8.

⁴⁰ Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, pp. 486-493.

radio station that led an anticommunist campaign across the rural Andes at mid-century, carried the Colombo-Americano's programs free of charge.⁴¹

In the area of print media the USIA enjoyed similar success to the OIAA in getting stories accepted by the Colombian press. By the early 1960s, stories from the USIA news service were regularly printed in all mainstream newspapers. Sometimes articles even appeared under an overt USIS dateline.⁴² Pamphlets were also an important element of the information program, and outside of Latin America, USIA information centers were key distribution points for such materials. In Latin America, where the USIA did not have information centers as distribution points, BNC libraries were encouraged to play a similar role.

Growth and Reformulation of American Schools in the Cold War Era

As evidenced in earlier chapters, initial US government support for American schools in Latin America developed amidst heightened concerns over both Axis fifth columns and European cultural influences in the region. During the Cold War, however, as Washington continued support to these schools, concern for European influence was less pronounced. In Colombia, German, British, Italian and French schools and cultural centers returned after the war, but by then their US counterparts were well established on the cultural landscape. As compared to a decade earlier, the US-sponsored institutions did not have to compete with Europeans to fill their classrooms and galleries.

⁴¹ "USIA Inspection Report: USIS Colombia," 27 Oct. 1959. Educational programs broadcast over Radio Sutatenza were one method employed by the Church to expand its outreach in rural Colombia. See: Camilo Torres and Berta Corredor Rodríguez, *Las escuelas radiofónicas de Sutatenza, Colombia: evaluación sociológica de los resultados* (Bogotá: Oficina Internacional de investigaciones Sociales de FERES, 1961); Stefan A. Musto, *Los Medios de comunicación social al servicio del desarrollo rural: análisis de eficiencia de "Acción Cultural Popular—Radio Sutatenza"* (Bogotá: Acción Cultural Popular, 1971).

⁴² "USIA Inspection Report: USIS Colombia," 22 June 1962 and 27 Oct. 1959.

In the early decades of the Cold War, the US government made a commitment to strengthening and expanding American schools abroad. A post-war boom in US business, diplomatic and military personnel overseas created higher demand for these schools in national and regional capitals across the globe. Rising interest among foreign nationals in US-style, bilingual education significantly added to this demand. The State Department extended support to existing and new schools with grants to educational organizations, like the previously discussed Inter-American School Service (IASS). Schools relied on these organizations to screen applicants, advertise teaching vacancies, secure curriculum resources, and to provide professional development and college placement services. More directly, the State Department provided periodic grants to fund capital expansion projects. Such grants were helpful in the 1950s and 1960s as schools were developing secondary programs and building new campuses to accommodate growing local demand.

The State Department retained and expanded existing support programs for American Schools after the USIA assumed program responsibilities for BNCs in 1953. Between the end of the Second World War and the 1964 founding of the department's Office of Overseas Schools, the number of United States citizens working abroad increased significantly. In part, the increase was due to the larger US diplomatic and military missions, but the post-war spread of US business was also contributing to the growth. US citizens abroad continued to found elementary and secondary schools for their children in collaboration with nationals of their host countries. By 1965, 121 independent, nonsectarian American Schools were receiving grants and professional

assistance through the State Department's program. Over a third of these schools, a disproportionate number, were located in Latin America.⁴³

As the Colombian population doubled between 1940 and 1964, so too did the number of US citizens living in that nation. Almost two decades after the world war, US citizens were 10% of the nation's total foreign population.⁴⁴ Cold War development programs and especially the Alliance for Progress had driven up the number of US aid workers, development specialists, and diplomats. Post-war military and business relationships between the two countries strongly contributed to the growth as well. Significantly, as compared to a generation earlier when restrictive citizenship laws and Foreign Service marriage regulations discouraged US families from living abroad, the 1950s and 1960s recorded higher numbers of US children living with their parents in Colombia and overseas. Established American schools expanded to meet the influx but new institutions were founded as well.

The US government grew more reliant on Colombia's American schools in the post war decades because Cold War anticommunism was implemented by large diplomatic, civilian and military staffs. Schools, especially the Colegio Nueva Granda in the capital, were a necessary support structure for the broad diplomatic mission. Members of the US diplomatic community expected their government to assist the schools their children attended, and Washington now obliged. At the same time, US businesses in Colombia continued to demand support for the schools their children attended.

⁴³ AASA, *The Mission Called the O/OS*.

⁴⁴ Excepting bordering countries, Spain was then the only nation with a comparably high number of citizens residing in Colombia. "Población extranjera por grupos de edad y sexo, según países de nacimiento," Cuadro 15, *XIII Censo Nacional de Población – 15 de Julio 1964*, p. 70.

In Medellín, Barranquilla, and Cartagena, US business interests were instrumental in founding local American schools. Though US children were fewer than three of ten in the schools' student bodies, US nationals were well represented on boards of directors, in administrations, faculties and parent-teacher organizations. While US business families were residing in Colombia, they demonstrated strong interest in strengthening these schools. They actively pursued US funding and the official designation as an "American School" that came with it. As compared to the 1930s, educational arrangements for the children of US families abroad were now a serious government concern. Business and diplomatic families had the support of the State Department.

Still, neither US reliance on these schools nor the key roles US citizens played in their operation should mask the role of local Colombian populations in developing them. US turnover was high in the schools as children moved in and out of Colombia as their parents' careers demanded. While US families and teachers came and went both in the midst of and at the end of school years, Colombian families remained. Not surprisingly, school and community cultures were more heavily influenced by these local families and local traditions. And Colombians were at the forefront of efforts to stabilize these institutions and strengthen their programs for the long term.

For the Colombian families that enrolled their children in American schools, bilingualism was always an important goal. As secondary programs were added to all schools in the 1950s and 1960s, accreditation by educational authorities in both countries made the schools even more attractive to these families. A bilingual education that terminated with both an official US high school diploma and an official Colombian bachillerato certificate positioned local graduates for smooth transition into higher

education and professional careers at home and abroad. In a nation with limited and largely traditional educational resources, credentials secured via graduation from an American school opened alternative routes to higher education.

Colombians involved in the operation of American schools were from upper-class families. Within their class, these were modernist elites who were attracted to a technical rather than a classical European humanist education. Fathers of students were business owners or had professional careers in and out of government. Wives and husbands had lived or traveled abroad, and they usually spoke second languages (often English). As these schools grew in regional settings and expanded with Cold War funding, Colombians who identified with US democracy, capitalism or culture chose these schools for their children. These parents often had broad business, familial, educational and cultural ties to the US, but they might also have similarly deep connections to a third nation. On the cosmopolitan Caribbean coast, for example, Colombian families of recent Syrio-Lebanese decent were a significant minority within the school communities at Cartagena and Barranquilla. In Medellín especially, European families joined an American school community dominated by Colombians who were well connected to local industry and international commerce. By the 1970s, many of the families in these schools had established generational connections to them.

In the 1960s, elite Colombian families were well represented in Bogotá's Colegio Nueva Granada, and the school was popular with lawyers, doctors, engineers, and architects from the capital's expanding professional classes. The school, however, retained a US majority among its student body, and in this regard it was unique among the American schools of Colombia. It's location in the capital fed the high diplomatic

demographic of its classrooms, and increasing numbers of Foreign Service employees, development specialists, and military personnel engaged in the US diplomatic mission were dependent on the school to educate their children. Indeed, through the 1960s US government employees comprised 20% of the colegio's parent community. US citizens working in business also relied on the school; parents employed in the various aspects of the oil industry or as representatives of US and other foreign firms made up approximately another 25%.⁴⁵ The school was a crucial secondary support system for private organizations like the Ford and Rockefeller foundations and for US businesses in and around the capital.

In contrast and more typical of Colombia's American schools, the Colegio Jorge Washington in Cartagena catered to fewer US families. Opened in 1952, it replaced a small school operated by the Andian National Corporation, a US oil company, for the children of its US and Colombian managers. The new school was a collaborative effort between US and Colombian parents and the local Cartagena business community. Toward the school's founding, the high profile support of the commander of the US Naval mission in the city proved helpful as well.⁴⁶ Notably, among the Colombian founders of the school were members of the local chamber of commerce and civic organizations that believed a strong American school would help attract international business to their city. As school board members, these Colombian men led a capital campaign among local and foreign businesses, and they actively lobbied the US State

⁴⁵ Family directories (1966-1970), CNG MSS, Office of Isabel Zapata, F: Family Directory 1966-1967.

⁴⁶ J.C. Gibson to Dr. William E. Dunn, Inter-American School Service, 29 Apr. 1954, *Libro de Actas: Sociedad Escuela Jorge Washington* (hereafter LA), Office of the Director, Colegio Jorge Washington, Cartagena, Colombia (hereafter CJW/Cartagena MSS).

Department and affiliated educational agencies for support.⁴⁷ Schools are complicated institutions to establish, and even after its founding the colegio struggled to piece together business donations and loans to cover its operating costs. Yet, the school was also immediately attracting Colombian families who were interested in elementary programs in English.⁴⁸ While US oil companies and the naval mission initially continued as important advocates for the new school, US children were always few in number in its classroom. It was Colombian families that made the school viable as they molded US educational resources around local needs.

Because most American schools in Colombia did not have secondary programs through most of the 1950s, many US families sent students home upon completion of elementary programs. Local students moved into Colombian secondary schools, but finding spaces for them was often difficult because secondary classrooms were still at a premium. This was especially true on the Caribbean coast. Abruptly ending English-speaking instruction after graduating from eighth grade created further disadvantages from the perspective of local families who valued bilingual education. When schools subsequently added full secondary programs and secured accreditation by US and Colombian educational authorities, Colombian enrollments skyrocketed.

For US and Colombian students, accreditation provided a recognizable high school transcript and an officially recognized US high school diploma. Accreditation was secured through the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges (SACS), a regional

⁴⁷ Aclides Tono de la E., Chamber of Commerce/ Cartagena, to Dr. William E. Dunn, Inter-American School Service, 27 April 1954, LA, CJW/Cartagena MSS; Gilberto Delgado, Club de Rotario de Cartagena, to Dr. William E. Dunn, Inter-American School Service, 29 April 1954, LA, CJW/Cartagena MSS.

⁴⁸ Acta #4 de la Sociedad Escuela Jorge Washington, 2 Nov. 1952, LA, CJW/Cartagena MSS. See also in the same location: Acta #5 (5 Nov. 1952), Acta #14 (5 Oct. 1953); Acta #15 (19 Oct. 1953); Acta #27 (30 July 1954); Acta #34 (3 Dec. 1954).

accreditation agency in the US South. SACS provided schools with an ongoing review process and professional guidance for meeting regional US elementary and secondary education standards. Importantly, accreditation allowed for a smooth transition for both US and Colombian graduates into US universities; applicants from American schools could be evaluated by the same standards as all other applicants who had received an official US high school diploma. Questions about language proficiency, credits, courses and preparation that had complicated the process for decades disappeared. From the standpoint of linking Colombian nationals with US higher education, accreditation by SACS was a most important development. SACS accreditation was crucial educational infrastructure that facilitated growth in US cultural influence.

At the same time, it was reciprocally important to the Colombian majority in these schools that academic programs meet the Ministry of National Education's requirements for secondary education. Attainment of bachillerato status was necessary for admittance to Colombian universities. Because many American school graduates wanted the option to attend a university at home and because a few chose to attend European universities, it was necessary to satisfy all of the ministry's requirements. To meet curriculum standards, the schools placed new emphasis on Spanish language instructions in literature, history and geography courses. As a result, the number of Colombian educators on staff increased, and by the mid-1960s Colombians represented up to 40% of each school's faculty. Indicative of the ongoing Colombianization of the schools, the figure exceeded 50% in all institutions by the 1970s.⁴⁹ Maintaining bilingual and dually

⁴⁹ "Study of the Colombian-American Binational Schools to Form a Planning Base," 1966, CNG MSS, Archivos Muertos, F: University of Alabama, p. 61; School Inspection Report, 19 May 1952, (completed by Departamento de Antioquia -Sección de Educación Publica), Archives of Colegio Colon,

accredited academic programs was a challenge for these young American schools, and US government support as well as direct assistance from the Ford Foundation was central to their successes.⁵⁰ Over time, the schools developed demanding academic programs and earned reputations that placed them among the best schools in the nation. Securing accreditation from both nations allowed schools to grow from small bilingual elementary programs with a decidedly US orientation into rigorous college preparatory programs that met requirements of both governments. The schools were models of cultural reciprocity.

Notably, the gender composition of Colombia's American schools changed as accreditations were secured from SACS and the Ministry of National Education. Student bodies were more heavily female in their early years, but once dual accreditations were in place more Colombian families began to send their sons to the schools. In Bogotá, accreditation resulted in greater gender balance among a student body that had been more female than male. In Medellín, accreditations gave the high school a clear male majority; there, in the 1960s as accredited secondary programs were added, male graduates outnumbered females by a ratio of 2:1. Medellín families who enrolled their children in the school were well connected to the industries that made the city and the region the engine of the national economy, and they valued English language instruction because it was the language of modern business. Even more, they valued the access the accredited school granted their sons to US and Colombian university programs in science and technology. In fact, most Colombian male students entering the school in the early 1960s who continued through graduation planned to begin US university programs in engineering. Medicine and architecture were also popular career choices for the young

Communications Office, The Columbus School, Medellín, Colombia (hereafter CS/Medellín MSS); *Pages Torn Form Time* [1973 Yearbook of the Columbus School] (Medellín: Colegio Cristóbal Colón, 1973).

⁵⁰ Grant List, 1965-66, CNG MSS, Archivos Muertos, F: Ford Foundation Reports and Miscellaneous.

men. While some young women planned to study medicine, more intended to become bilingual secretaries.⁵¹

On the coast, the American schools were also heavily female from the start, but there too gender demographics changed with accreditation. In Cartagena, for example, girls outnumbered boys by a ratio of 4:1 until accreditations were secured in the late 1960s. In that region, girls historically had fewer secondary options because there were fewer schools run by the Church, and the American schools initially attracted families that valued English fluency for their daughters. Here, too, among secondary students, it was also common for girls to aspire toward a career as a bilingual secretary. The few boys attending the coastal high schools before accreditation were foreigners or Colombians with specific plans to study in the US. Once dual accreditations from the US and Colombia were secured, an influx of male students into the schools eventually produced approximate gender parity.⁵²

As schools expanded secondary programs to meet local demand, US support came for curriculum and professional development to strengthen the academic programs. Cultural programmers in Washington recognized the importance of the schools as model of US education. They were of course interested in maintaining influence among elite

⁵¹ School Inspection Report, 19 May 1952, CS/Medellín MSS; “Promociones Calendario A,” *Historia – The Columbus School*, CS/Medellín MSS; Acta de Segunda Reunión del Curso Secretaria Bilingüe, 31 May 1966, Actas2/Med, CCA/Medellín MSS. See the following yearbooks of the Colegio Cristóbal Colón: *Periscope '70* (Medellín: Colegio Cristóbal Colón, 1970); *Pioneering '66* (Medellín: Colegio Cristóbal Colón, 1966); *Pages Torn Form Time, 1971* (Medellín: Colegio Cristóbal Colón, 1971); *Pages Torn Form Time, 1973* (Medellín: Colegio Cristóbal Colón, 1973); *Justice, 1974* (Medellín: Colegio Cristóbal Colón, 1974). See the following yearbooks of the Colegio Nueva Granada: *Andean 1960* (Bogotá: Editorial Catolicismo, 1960); *Andean 1961* (Bogotá: Editorial Guadalupe, 1961); *Andean 1962* (Bogotá: Editorial Guadalupe, 1962); *Andean 1963* (Bogotá: Editorial Guadalupe, 1963); *Andean 1964* (Bogotá: Colegio Nueva Granada, 1964); *Andean 1968* (Bogotá: Colegio Nueva Granada, 1968); *Andean 1969* (Bogotá: Colegio Nueva Granada, 1969).

⁵² Commencement ceremony programs of the Karl C. Parrish School, 1938-2004, KCP MSS; *Windleaf 1971* [Yearbook of the Colegio Jorge Washington] (Cartagena: 1971); 1969-70 Class Photos, *Atarayya 1977* [Yearbook of the Colegio Jorge Washington] (Cartagena: 1977); Ramon del Castillo, “50 Años COJOWA – Historia,” *Anuario 2002* [Yearbook of the Colegio Jorge Washington] (Cartagena: 2002).

Colombian families, but they also saw the schools as part of broader educational communities in their host cities and regions. They envisaged schools not as isolated elite campuses, but as models of US education that could support local Colombian efforts to expand and improve schooling. Logically, the school in Bogotá was the initial focus of State Department efforts to raise academic standards and make it a model. Yet, as rapidly as they appeared in other cities, new American schools also received direct State Department support toward the goal of academic excellence.

State Department programs fostered direct educational relationships among the various American school communities in Colombia and educational institutions in the US. The State Department funded organizational processes and subsidized transportation costs for establishing regional education associations like the Colombian-American Association of Binational Schools. The department worked with and encouraged the Ford Foundation, US universities, and public school systems to help schools abroad to become models of US education. The department supported relationships like that which developed between the schools in Colombia and the University of Alabama in the early 1960s. The university offered degree programs in education that were uniquely created for these schools. University of Alabama professors traveled regularly to Colombia and gave multiple courses each year. By end of 1960s, 114 educators --US, Colombian, and third country nationals-- earned graduate credit toward a degree. At the same time, more than a dozen bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees were granted to teachers. The program allowed US teachers to complete a degree while living abroad, but it also granted Colombian educators uncomplicated and subsidized access to a US university

education.⁵³ In the course of the Cold War, the University of Alabama continued to develop its programs for teachers abroad extending it to American schools in other Andean and Caribbean nations and, then, around the world.

Additional transnational links were established between the American schools of Colombia and the US public educational systems. In the interest of improving these schools' academic programs and helping them to model the best practices of US education, the State Department initiated its School-to-School program. The program aimed to pair "highly active, forward looking, school districts" in the US with an American school in Latin America.⁵⁴ Exchanges of faculty and students were common and there were exchanges of administrators as well. The Colegio Karl C. Parrish in Barranquilla was paired with Huntsville, Alabama in the 1960s. The city was home of the Marshall Space Flight Center, which was then developing the technology for carrying man and materials into space. At a time when the violence of the Civil Rights era cast a negative international spotlight on Selma, Montgomery, and other Alabaman and Southern US cities, Huntsville stood out as a symbol of a modernity and progress. The Colegio Nueva Granada in Bogotá was selectively paired with Newton, Massachusetts, because the city was home to Boston College, a Jesuit school with a growing international reputation. Catholic Medellín and Cartagena were paired with modern communities rising in the desert Southwest: Las Vegas, Nevada and Mesa, Arizona.⁵⁵

⁵³ Kenneth Edwin Crowl, "A Comparative Study of the Programs between the College of Education, University of Alabama, and the Association of Colombian-American Binational Schools; and the College of Education, University of Alabama, and Selected Ecuadorian Schools" (Ed.D. diss., University of Alabama, 1972), pp. 25-27, 40-45.

⁵⁴ *International Education Bridges the Gulf* (Bogotá: Association of Colombian-American Bi-National Schools, 1968), CNG MSS, Archivos Muertos, F: Col.-Carib-Amer. Schools Association – Pamphlets, p. 4.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-8.

Collaboration resulting from such programs constructed transnational community among educators, students, and families on both continents.

Anticommunism rather than mutual understanding became the ideological impulse behind US government support for American schools in the post-war period. Individually, the institutions' philosophies remained very much grounded in mutual understanding, and their dual academic programs modeled cultural reciprocity.⁵⁶ But, anticommunism was very much part of each school's culture because it was central to the contemporary politics of both nations. Indeed, shared anticommunism was itself grounds for mutual understanding. Stressing appreciation for democratic values, the executive board of Bogotá's Colegio Nueva Granda asserted that:

*the school will have failed in one of its most important missions if it does not produce students who will become public-spirited, active citizens who know the nature of the conflict between the Free World and International Communism and are prepared to dedicate themselves to the protection and improvement of individual rights and the heritage of the Free World.*⁵⁷

Given its ties to the diplomatic community, the Bogotá school intersected more closely with explicitly anticommunist government programming than the other schools in the nation. Seniors and juniors, for example, were involved with community service projects of Acción Comunal and the Alliance for Progress. Students volunteered to work in literacy programs at Ciudad Kennedy [Kennedy City], a housing community built through the Alliance for Progress and renamed for the fallen president by locals.⁵⁸ For those same students, their parents, and the wider school community, lecture series and

⁵⁶ Association of Colombian American Schools (ACAS), *Manual for School Board Members*, 1963, CNG MSS, Archivos Muertos, F: Col.-Carib-Amer. Schools Association – Pamphlets, p. i-iv.

⁵⁷ "Overseas School Questionnaire," 30 Oct. 1964, CNG MSS, Archivos Muertos, F: US Government Rpts., p. 7.

⁵⁸ Kennedy had visited the site of the project on his tour of Bogotá in 1961. In the city, he was greeted by crowds estimated at over 500,000. *El Heraldo* (Barranquilla), 18 Dec. 1961, p. 1; "Overseas School Questionnaire," 30 Oct. 1964, p. 9.

public affairs forums were held at the school to encourage elite support for the social reforms. Lectures and follow-up discussions on public housing, illiteracy, agricultural reform, and labor courted elite support for anticommunist collaboration in line with National Front and USIA objectives.⁵⁹ The other American schools were less closely positioned to the diplomatic and bureaucratic structures of the capital, but anticommunist values were explicit in their programs as well. Such values were reinforced by institutional collaboration and transnational links to the US educational system, but communism was already a popular concern among the elite Colombian families who chose US-style education for their children.

Centros Colombo-Americanos on the Cold War Cultural Stage

Collectively the four cultural centers in Barranquilla, Cartagena, Medellín and Bogotá enrolled almost 8,000 students annually by the mid-1960s. Other Colombo-Americanos at Cali, Bucaramanga, and Manizales brought that figure to well over 10,000.⁶⁰ Significantly, by that decade there were now many more commercial schools and university programs that competed for a share of the English teaching market, and this presented a challenge especially for the centers on the coast which were more recently founded and, thus, less established. On the coast as elsewhere, boards of directors and administrators adjusted programming to remain competitive, and they always kept tuition and fees at middle-class levels. There was some variation between centers, but in general Colombo-Americanos offered English language courses in the

⁵⁹ “CNG Social Awareness: Schmid-Bradford - School in the 60’s,” *Insights* [Magazine of the Colegio Nueva Granada] (October 2005), p. 31.

⁶⁰ Acta (18 Mar. 1966), *Actas - Centro Colombo-Americano de Barranquilla*, Office of the Director, Centro Colombo-Americano, Barranquilla, Colombia (hereafter *Actas/Bq*, CCA/Barranquilla MSS); “Resumen de Matrícula en el Colombo-Americano, Medellín, 1959-1966,” 21 June 1966, Minutes of the Board of Directors, Centro Colombo-Americano de Medellín. *Libro de Actas - Centro 1954-1977* (hereafter *Acts2/Med*), CCA/Medellín MSS.; Acta (6 June 1966), *Libro de Actas del Centro Colombo-Americanos, Libro #2* (hereafter *Actas2*), CCA/Bogotá MSS.

evening that were popular with professionals, university students, and employees of local businesses. Secondary students, who were often sent by their parents, filled classrooms in the early morning and mid-afternoon, before and after their regular school days. In all centers, new business programs and, especially, bilingual secretary courses were popular. At the same time, cultural programming remained an important aspect of the BNCs' activities, and art exhibits, musical presentations, library programs and lecture series continued.

From the start, the OIAA and the State Department valued BNCs as institutes that were directed locally, contributed to mutual understanding, and reached the emerging middle class.⁶¹ When the USIA was later established and assumed responsibility for BNC support programs, it sought greater control over institutes; USIA management initially wanted to bring BNC programs more directly in line with its information mission. Yet, it quickly realized it had little authority over the institutes. USIA documentation is replete with frustrated acknowledgement that BNCs were foreign entities controlled by local boards.⁶² They could not be easily manipulated. Still, that the USIA continued to fund existing BNCs and enthusiastically facilitated their expansion through the 1960s evidences the agency's appreciation for the binational center model. Most members of the centers' boards of directors were educated, upper-class Colombians with modernist visions. Their voluntary participation in directing the centers evidenced their enthusiasm for engaging US cultural and educational resources and models. They were Colombian civic, business and cultural leaders who demonstrated ideological anticommunism and

⁶¹Murphy, "Departmental Policy in its Program of Assistance to Cultural Centers," pp. 19-27. See especially in the same report: Appendix B - "Preliminary Draft #3: Departmental Policy in its Program of Assistance to Cultural Centers," p. 39.

⁶² The acknowledgment came early. Office of Research and Evaluation –USIA, "Binational Centers Evaluated: Analysis of Replies to Information and Educational Exchange Circular 83," October 1953, NARG 59, 511.00/1-1554; "USIA Inspection Report: USIS Colombia," 22 June 1962.

commitment to international capitalism through the programming they directed. Often they were individuals who had or would later serve in government. At Medellín, for example, the director of the board in 1961 had to resign the post because he was appointed as governor of the Department of Antioquia.⁶³ As the USIA quickly recognized that BNCs provided an arena for engaging with influential elites, intellectuals, and the emerging middle and professional classes, its support for them grew. Before the 1970s, each of the Colombo-Americanos were categorized as “class A” institutions by the USIA, and this made them eligible for the highest level of support: capital expansion grants, full salary for a board-hired US director, some grants for administrative positions, and one or two grantee teachers.

The USIA especially appreciated BNCs’ roles in linking Latin American students to higher education in the US. In the early Cold War, the agency was concerned over the increasing numbers of Latin American students studying behind the iron curtain. By its own estimates, the number was small before Cuba strengthened its ties to the Soviet Union. For the 1960-61 academic year, it estimated that 400 Latin Americans were studying in Communist Bloc nations. Just nine were known to be Colombian. However, the total number had risen to 3,500 students the following year. With such rising numbers, the USIA was determined to maintain and expand the educational infrastructure that supported Latin American enrollment in US colleges and universities.⁶⁴

Indicative of the growing appeal of US higher education in Colombia, the number of Colombian students enrolling in US colleges rose rapidly in the early Cold War.

American schools on average sent 50% of their graduates to study in the US, and some

⁶³ Acta (3 Mar. 1961), Actas2/Med, CCA/Medellín MSS.

⁶⁴ “Communist Propaganda Activities in Latin America in 1961,” 11 June 1962, NARG 306, Office of Research, B9, F: “R” Reports - 1960-1963.

years the percentage was higher.⁶⁵ Colombo-Americans assisted many other students with application and scholarship processes. By 1955, as the US emerged as a global education leader, approximately 34,000 foreign students were enrolled in US higher education. Latin Americans comprised 25% (or 8,446 students) of the total. Significantly, at that time Colombia sent more of its students to the US than any other Latin American nation. Colombians were 15% of the region's total (or 1,301 students), and males outnumbered females by a ratio of 8:1. Most students were undergraduates, and close to half (48% or 625 students) were studying engineering, medicine, or science. Programs in the social sciences, education, and the humanities were chosen by another 31% of the students while business and agriculture were popular in smaller percentages.⁶⁶ Significantly, the number of Colombian students in US higher education in 1955 was up almost 45% over enrollment five years earlier.⁶⁷ By 1970, Latin Americans were then less than 20% of the foreign student population in the US. There were more Cubans and Mexicans studying in the US than Colombians, but the nation ranked third in the tally of students among all Latin American countries. Colombian enthusiasm for US higher education was not abating; indeed, between the 1955 and 1970, the number of Colombians enrolled in US colleges and universities increased by one-third.⁶⁸ American

⁶⁵ Adams, "Leadership and School Climate: A Mixed Methods Study of United States-Accredited Colombian Schools," pp. 10-14; Lester Landers, "Factors Which Influence Parental Choice of American Sponsored Overseas Schools in Colombia" (PhD diss., University of Alabama, 1985), pp. 93-96. On the attractiveness of American schools for Colombian parents, see also: Paul G. Orr, *A Research Matrix: The American-Sponsored Overseas School* (Buzzards Bay, MA: Center for International Education, 1974); A. Conlon, "The Contributions of American Sponsored Overseas Schools in Fostering, Promoting, and Maintaining Cross-cultural Understanding between the Peoples of the Americas" (PhD diss., University of Alabama, 1982); P. Cadby, "The Adoption of American Bilingual Schools in Costa Rica: A Study in Sociocultural Choice" (PhD. Diss., University of Montana, 1975).

⁶⁶ Institute of International Education (IIE), *Open Doors: A Report on Three Surveys* (New York: IIE, 1955), pp. 6-7, 41-45.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7

⁶⁸ Cuban students totaled 4,487. The figure reflected the growth of the Cuban exile community in the US during the 1960s. Almost twice as many Cubans were enrolled in higher education than Mexicans (2,501

schools and Colombo-Americano cultural centers did not account for all of the movement of Colombian students into US higher education, but they initiated crucial processes toward establishing and sustaining the trend. By the turn of the century, approximately 6,700 Colombians came to the US annually as foreign students.⁶⁹

Within Latin America, the USIA also showed great concern for a growing number of cultural centers and friendship societies affiliated with communist nations. In 1961, it counted 122 Sino-Soviet centers and societies in the region: two-thirds were affiliated with the USSR or nations of the Soviet bloc while the others were connected to China. In Colombia, formal relations with Moscow had been suspended for more than a decade but small, independent Colombian-Soviet cultural centers and friendship societies legally existed in Bogotá and Medellín. A Colombian Association of Friends of China was also active in the capital, and there were four Cuban-Colombian cultural organizations throughout the country. Radio and television broadcasts from communist nations added to the USIA anxiety over communist influences as did East German and Czechoslovakian participation in Bogotá trade shows.⁷⁰

Colombo-Americano policy forbade formal participation in diplomatic politics but in reality the centers were never very distant from them. Ideological compatibility regarding Cold War principles was clear among many directors, faculty, and participants in center programming and such compatibility blurred distinctions between politics and

students). The number of Colombians studying in the US totaled 2,045 in 1970. IIE, *Open Doors: Report on International Education* (New York: IIE, 1970), pp. 22-29.

⁶⁹ As one important indicator of the global response to US educational resources, there were 547,867 foreign students studying in the US by 2001. Asian nationals represented more than 55% of the global total while Latin Americans were now less than 12%. Colombian enrollment in that year reached 6,765 and within Latin America only Mexico and Brazil sent a greater number of students to the US. Institute of International Education, IIE Network, Data Tables/2001, "Foreign Students by Academic Level and Place of Origin, 2000/2001," <http://opendoors.iienetwor.org> [accessed March 13, 2010].

⁷⁰ "Communist Propaganda Activities in Latin America in 1961," 11 June 1962, NARG 306, Office of Research, B9, F: "R" Reports - 1960-1963.

culture. As detailed below, BNC programming drew on local, national, and transnational resources that were embedded in cultures of anticommunism, but support for the Cold War was not the institutional mission of these centers. In the early 1950s, the Korean War had provided an important point of collaboration between the two nations and spurred a flurry of activity in the centers. Colombia's military band performed the US national anthem and other US songs at Colombo-Americano Fourth of July celebrations and US consuls organized lectures on "The UN and Korea." But there were limits to the centers' embrace of Cold War military culture. Supporting a discourse of anticommunism through lectures was acceptable, for example, but allowing Colombia's Korean War Veterans to hold meeting at the centers was not.⁷¹

Building library collections was one method employed by the USIA to support a culture of anticommunism within BNCs. Collections had declined in the early Cold War with decreased funding as most efforts in the area of print publications focused on the growing network of US information centers. After the OIAA's demise, fewer books from either country were translated and donated by the State Department to cultural center libraries. In those centers, boards of directors struggled with book costs and import fees. Maintaining English-Spanish parity on the shelves remained a goal of all centers, but it was never achieved. Centers at Bogotá and Medellín had advantages in this regard because their founding collections had been established when OIAA-inspired programs were still operating at full speed. For the newer centers like those on the coast at Barranquilla and Cartagena, building collections and keeping them current posed huge financial challenges.

⁷¹ Independence Day Celebration Invitations, 4 July 1951, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS; Acta (9 Jan. 1951), Actas1/Med, CCA/Medellín MSS; "Quarterly Statement on Cultural Institutes," Oct.-Dec. 1952, Actas1/Med, CCA/Medellín MSS.

With the decline of book translation programs after the war, Colombo-Americano libraries in the 1950s often relied on donations from locally residing US citizens. Personal collections were donated at the death of long-term US residents. Diplomatic wives organized fundraising efforts, and consulates and US businesses donated old magazines.⁷² From the perspective of professional librarians, this was not the best way to build a collection; from the political perspective of the USIA, Colombo-Americano libraries were failing to attract intellectuals, academics and professionals who could support its anticommunist mission. The agency did not control the libraries, but it did increase its influence over them at the start of the 1960s with an infusion of resources to expand collections, professionalize staff, and build new facilities. Across that decade, BNC library collections grew, periodical holdings expanded, and all locales noted significant boosts in the number of users. Spanish language holdings were also increased, but English remained the dominant language of the stacks.⁷³

USIA-subsidized books tended toward themes of capitalism, communism, democracy, and US-Colombian relations. Contemporary professional reference materials in medicine, economics, architecture, energy and engineering were also regularly received from the agency.⁷⁴ Still, USIA influence in shaping these library collections should not be overstated. Boards of directors welcomed the USIA library books, grants

⁷² Acta (23 July 1957) and Acta (12 May 1958), Actas/Bq, CCA/Barranquilla MSS; Acta (9 Jan. 1951), Actas1/Med, CCA/Medellín MSS.

⁷³ Acta (14 Sep. 1965), Actas/Bq, CCA/Barranquilla MSS; *Conozca su Biblioteca: Boletín Informativo* [library bulletin of the Centro Colombo-Americano de Medellín] No. 1 (Jan.-Mar. 1965), Centro de Documentacion - Biblioteca, CCA/Medellín MSS. See also the following issues of the bulletin: No. 2 (Aug. 1965), No. 3 (Oct. 1965), No. 5 (May 1966), No. 6 (Aug. 1966).

⁷⁴ "Activities of the Centro-Colombo Americano: March 1963" [monthly calendar of events], LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS; "Nuevas Obras para la Biblioteca del Colombo-Americano," *Diario del Caribe* (Barranquilla), 1 July 1964; Acta (16 May 1967), Actas/Bq, CCA/Barranquilla MSS; "USIA Inspection Report: USIS Colombia," 22 June 1962.

and the professional guidance that came along with them.⁷⁵ Cold War ideology was common ground and library resources unapologetically reflected it. At the same time, boards, administrators, and librarians were not always willing to move in the programming directions suggested by its book patrons. Boards of directors rejected, for example, USIA pressure to create portable circulating collections to lend en masse to civic organizations in working-class barrios. The program was too costly and would have depleted library shelves of resources needed to serve students and library members in-house. Boards also refused to extend library hours to support USIA programs unless all financial costs were covered.⁷⁶

In the early post-war decades, labor radicalism was a primary concern of Colombian politicians, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, and US diplomats. Indicative of the seriousness with which Washington approached the issues, labor attachés were now on staff at many US embassies throughout the world. The USIA wanted to engage BNCs as part of its persuasive apparatus, and it pressured centers to reach out to labor groups. In Colombia, the USIA asked Colombo-Americano boards to establish new branches in barrios of the laboring classes. As envisioned, these community centers would provide small libraries, exhibits, sports equipment, “elementary English teaching,” and meeting space for “responsible” community leaders in order to “offset at least some [communist] infiltration.”⁷⁷ Encouraged by the agency and organized by the US labor attaché, three centers briefly existed in Bogotá and Cali, but plans to have Colombo-Americanos guarantee their financial viability failed. None of the BNCs were

⁷⁵ Acta (14 Sep. 1965), Actas/Bq, CCA/Barranquilla MSS; Acta (20 Feb. 1957), Actas2/Med, CCA/Medellín MSS.

⁷⁶ “USIA Inspection Report: USIS Colombia,” 22 June 1962; Acta (9 Sep. 1972), Actas2, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

⁷⁷ “USIA Inspection Report: USIS Colombia,” 27 Oct. 1959.

in position to do so, and their boards were not inclined to enter so closely into political planning with the embassy. Ideological anticommunist compatibility was one thing, but expanding programs to specifically accommodate US policies was another. The Bogotá Colombo-Americano, always more embedded in diplomatic currents, did offer consultative guidance to the community centers, but such support was limited. Indeed, the center's board explicitly refused to extend financial assistance or loans.⁷⁸

Colombo-Americanos were certainly willing to work with the USIA to the extent that their own institutional objectives were met. All centers willingly assumed responsibilities for the barrio film program in the early 1960s because it fit their overall educational and cultural missions. Communism was an acute concern among Colombian business and civic leaders who made up the majority on centers' boards, so they were also willing to assist local projects of Acción Comunal and SENA. Most centers also provided direct support for US Peace Corp volunteers. In Barranquilla, the president of the board of directors believed his center should be "on guard against all forms of communist infiltration" and he willingly accepted USIA propaganda to help educate those populations that were considered most vulnerable to communism.⁷⁹ In industrial Medellín, outreach to labor had been part of US cultural diplomacy from the start; in the 1940s, the coordination committee had arranged English language classes in factories at the requests of management and owners. Later, the local Colombo-Americano board continued these classes, allowed the US Consul to use the center for showing films to

⁷⁸ Acta (27 Oct. 1965) and (21 Sep. 1972), LH2, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

⁷⁹ "...hay que estar alerta contra toda clase de infiltración comunista, pues ya sabemos que en las clases campesina y obrera es donde existe más peligro por la misma ignorancia de esas gentes." José M. Ariano (President of the Board of Directors), Acta (14 July 1964), Actas/Bq, CCA/Barranquilla MSS. See also: Acta (13 Oct. 1964) and Acta (16 Mar. 1965), Actas/Bq, CCA/Barranquilla MSS; "Acción Comunal," *Diario del Caribe* (Barranquilla), 4 July 1964; "Se Necesita más Interés en los Problemas del Barrio," *Diario del Caribe* (Barranquilla), 1 July 1964.

union leaders, hosted exhibits on the post-war US labor movement, and consistently granted scholarships for English classes to individuals from the laboring classes.⁸⁰

Increasing the center's influence among labor was certainly an institutional objective in Medellín, and this reflected the heightened concern for radicalism among civic leaders in that region more than any USIA pressure.⁸¹

During the 1960s, the second important target group identified by the USIA was university students. Taking its cue from the Church and the Colombian government, the agency was concerned about radicalization among the educated youth of the rising middle class. In Bogotá, USIS efforts involved covert propaganda activities to counter communist influence in student organizations within national universities.⁸² At the same time, the agency pressured Colombo-Americanos to develop new programs to reach this vulnerable demographic. Because university students were already a significant segment of the center's student body, boards of directors were more comfortable and enthusiastic in pursuing initiatives among them. Working within the Acción Comunal model, the Bogotá center organized a group of student volunteers to assist local communities with their development projects and "to demonstrate the center's interest in the socio-economics of the people."⁸³ In Barranquilla, the center was becoming a venue that many local groups relied on for their own meetings and events. Preferring to steer clear of political controversy, the board backed away from loaning its facilities to organized labor but university groups were infrequently refused. After anti-US sentiments were expressed during a university group's poetry recital at the center, some attempts were made to

⁸⁰ "Quarterly Statement," April-June 1952 and April-June 1953, Actas1/Med, CCA/Medellín MSS; Acta (25 Sep. 1962), Actas2/Med, CCA/Medellín MSS.

⁸¹ Acta (24 Mar. 1962), Actas2/Med, CCA/Medellín MSS.

⁸² "USIA Inspection Report: USIS Colombia," 27 Oct. 1959.

⁸³ Acta (26 Jan. 1967), Actas2, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

screen student groups and ensure a basic level of philosophical compatibility. Yet, university groups remained the most frequent users of the center.⁸⁴ In Medellín, plans to draw university students into the center were more intense. Free library cards were offered, a committee of university students was organized “to advise the director,” and discussion forums were planned to explore such questions as “Why Castrosim is not the answer for Colombia.”⁸⁵

Public lectures were the most important Colombo-Americano activity which promoted a culture of anticommunism. General cultural discussions of literature, art, film, and music were still common, but each of the centers was also an important venue for presenting Colombian and US approaches to modernity. The broad discourse centered on collaborative Colombian-US development agendas, but implicitly or explicitly anticommunism was always very much a part of the program. More than during the decade before it or in those that followed, lecture series of the 1960s were more closely tied to Cold War themes. Logically, the trend was most pronounced in diplomatic Bogotá. Lecturers from both nations and from inside and outside of government argued the need for social reforms. They analyzed the challenges facing Colombia and celebrated the achievements of Acción Comunal, SENA, and ICETEX.⁸⁶ Fulbright scholars from the US, on exchange with Colombian universities, were frequent lecturers on community development, economic models, and contemporary theories of social

⁸⁴ “Más Centros de Cultura Para Barranquilla,” *El Heraldo* (Barranquilla) 5 May 1950; Acta (11 July 1966), Acta (14 Sep. 1965), and Acta (13 April 1964), Actas/Bq, CCA/Barranquilla MSS.

⁸⁵ Alvin L. Anderson, “Personal Objectives of the Director of the Centro Colombo-Americano, 1961-1963,” December 1961, Acta (24 Mar. 1962), Actas2/Med, CCA/Medellín MSS; Acta (24 April 1962), Actas2/Med, CCA/Medellín MSS.

⁸⁶ “Realizaciones Culturales” [monthly calendars of events], 1962-1965, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

change.⁸⁷ Colombians lectured on local engagement with the Alliance for Progress and the Church used the BNC's lecterns to promote its own approach to unionism. Roundtable discussions with all such lecturers brought students directly into these conversations.⁸⁸

Cold War Clash: Violence, Guerillas, and the Centros Colombo-Americanos

Among those who used the Colombo-American cultural stage to promote visions of modernity was Father Camilo Torres Restrepo. University chaplain and professor of sociology at the National University, the Catholic priest lectured at the Bogotá center in July and August of 1964. His presentation focused on Colombia's social inequalities and was part of the national speaking tour he had begun several months earlier.⁸⁹ The priest scholar's own academic research focused on rural migration to Bogotá, and his urban sociology courses at the university required students to complete a practicum in one of the city's marginalized barrios.⁹⁰ Students drawn to Father Torres and his courses were exactly the type of university student the National Front, the Church, and the USIA hoped to prevent from radicalizing. They were young, idealistic and of the rising middle class. Many were frustrated by continuing elite control of national politics through the National Front. Many were searching for opportunities to exert their own influence over the nation's path to modernity.

Some of Torres' students did become radicals, but, significantly, they were following the lead of their priest professor. By the start of 1965, Torres was spearheading his own national reform movement and promoting solutions ranging from expropriations

⁸⁷ "Realizaciones Culturales," 1963 (June) and 1965 (Feb., March, April, June, July, August, Sep., Oct.,) LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

⁸⁸ "Realizaciones Culturales," 1964 (July and Feb.) and 1965 (July), LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

⁸⁹ "Realizaciones Culturales," 1964 (July and Aug.), LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

⁹⁰ La Rosa, *Cleavages of the Cross*, p. 194.

of land to nationalization of hospitals and banks. By October of that year, Torres had left the Church and the academy to join the start-up Ejército de Liberación Nacional [Army of National Liberation or ELN]. Taking up arms against the National Front, the guerilla priest died on the front lines of violent rebellion shortly thereafter.⁹¹

In looking at the trajectory of Torres' academic life, post-war US educational influence in Colombia is clear. Typical of young intellectuals in the Church, he had been educated in Catholic universities of Europe, yet the foreign educational influences in and around him at the National University were more heavily of US origin. Most significantly, his colleague, friend, and the chair of the sociology department was Orlando Fals Borda. The most influential Colombian sociologist from mid-century forward, Fals Borda had completed his own doctoral studies on rural migration at the University of Florida at Gainesville, and he understood how to tap into the educational resources of the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, the developing Fulbright bureaucracies, and transnational educational communities in general.⁹² During the Alliance for Progress years, US resources were plentiful in Latin American higher education and were particularly available to social scientists and their departments. As Fals Borda built his department and career, he was quite successful at securing transnational educational resources. Significantly, Camilo Torres' course that had placed students in migrant barrios had grown out of a larger departmental research project that had been funded with a Rockefeller Foundation grant. Ironically, just prior to the priest's departure for the ELN, his friends were worried about his safety in the capital and began exploring academic options for him in the US. They encouraged him to take advantage of

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 154, 198-199

⁹² Ibid., pp. 184-199.

their and his connections to the Ford and Rockefeller foundations and the US university system in general.⁹³ While transnational education communities around him provided multiple academic options, he was on a more radical path.

In the glow of Castro's victory, the early 1960s witnessed the birth of guerilla movements throughout Latin America. In Colombia, these organizations were anti-elite, anti-National Front, anti-imperialist, and anti-US. They engaged with various models of revolution advocated by Che Guevara, Mao, and Marx, and using the resources offered to them by international communism linked their movements to polarized currents of the Cold War. Over the course of the next quarter century of international cold warring, many domestic revolutionaries groups made their agendas known in Colombia through violence and discourse. Movements drew support among intellectuals, university students, and dissidents of National Front-style democracy, but the soldiers of these armies were usually the rural and urban poor. Most guerilla organizations were short-lived, but two rebel armies survived long-term and kept the Colombian Cold War alive into the new century: the Cuban-inspired ELN and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia [Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia or FARC] that emerged as the armed wing of the Colombian Communist Party. The ideologies of the ELN and the FARC, like many of their contemporaries, developed under strong influences of foreign communism. Yet while they drew inspiration and supplies from Havana and Moscow, these guerilla movements were responding to local realities.⁹⁴

⁹³ Ibid., p. 196.

⁹⁴ Gustavo Gallón Giraldo, *La república de las armas: Relaciones entre fuerzas armadas y estado en Colombia, 1960-1980* (Bogotá: Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular, 1983); Richard Maullin, *Soldiers, Guerillas, and Politics in Colombia* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1973); Jaime Arenas Reyes, *La guerilla por dentro; análisis del E.L.N. colombiano* (Bogotá: Tercer Mundo, 1971); Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez, *Las FARC (1949-1966): de la autodefensa a la combinación de todas las formas de*

The formal emergence of guerilla movements brought increased violence and fear to the principal urban centers of the nation in the early 1960s. Especially from 1963 forward, guerilla activity in urban Colombia began to target individuals and institutions associated with the National Front, international capitalism, and the US in general. In that year, from May through November a particularly extensive bombing campaign reigned in Barranquilla, Bogotá, and Cali. In the course of single nights, from the urban Caribbean to the urban Andes, dozens of small bombs were planted and exploded by nascent guerilla organizations. The ELN, in its earliest formation and through its scattered fronts, was responsible for much of the bombing, but other groups with whom they merged, collaborated, or competed were active as well. In Barranquilla, offices and institutions associated with the US and international capitalism were popular targets: oil company offices, Sears retail showrooms, Caterpillar equipment outlets, and commercial English schools started by foreigners. The city's Centro Colombo-Americano was bombed on successive nights in August of 1963. Two "miniature bombs" were planted. One in the library caused smoke and dirtied some books. Female callers claimed responsibility in the name of the Frente de Liberación Nacional [National Liberation Front].⁹⁵ With later arrests, the bombers' motive was made clear; the front placed the bombs to protest joint US-Latin American military maneuvers then underway along the Colombian Caribbean.⁹⁶

lucha (Instituto de Estudios Políticos y Relaciones Internacionales, 1991); Karl, "State Formation, Violence and Cold War in Colombia, 1957-1966."

⁹⁵ "Viente Bombas Estallan en el País," *Diario del Caribe* (Barranquilla), 25 Sept. 1963; "Dos Más Bombas en Barranquilla," *El Heraldo* (Barranquilla), 2 Sep. 1963; "Llamadas," *El Heraldo* (Barranquilla), 2 Sep. 1963; "Dos Bombas Estallaron Anoche en Barranquilla," *El Heraldo* (Barranquilla), 28 Nov. 1963; "Serie de Explosiones Hubo Anoche: Once en Bogotá, dos en Barranquilla, una en Cali," *El Heraldo* (Barranquilla), 28 Nov. 1963; "Bombs Set Off in Colombia to Protest Joint Maneuvers," *NYT*, 29 Nov. 1963.

⁹⁶ "Colocaba Bombas Para Protestar," *Diario del Caribe* (Barranquilla), 4 July 1964.

In diplomatic Bogotá, many more US and foreign targets were hit during the 1960s bombing campaigns. US military officers stationed at the embassy were prime targets, but only property was ever damaged.⁹⁷ The USIS office in downtown Bogotá became a target as well.⁹⁸ So did the Centro Colombo-Americano which had limited security and an open door policy for the community. One bomb destroyed the center's art gallery, the Sala Tayrona, and ruined the paintings of Blasco Caballero, a Cartagena artist whose exhibit had opened a few weeks before.⁹⁹ The gallery was cleaned up, repairs were made to the walls, and its cultural mission continued as the art of two other Colombian artists was hung the next week.¹⁰⁰ Two months later, when bombs damaged a new and larger facility being constructed to house the center, damages were again quickly repaired.¹⁰¹ Some bombs, however, resulted in greater tragedy. A US teacher from Wisconsin, married to a Colombian and raising their two children locally, was among four people killed by a bomb in 1966. The other dead were Colombian nationals as were the dozens of people injured in that and other bombings of the center.¹⁰² The ELN claimed responsibility for most though not all attacks.

Not surprisingly, the center in Medellín, like its host city, was buffered from violent bombings of the 1960s. There, civic and Church leaders then retained enough social control to prevent the chaos being experienced in other cities. The city's success eventually came to an abrupt halt when drug lords began to exert local authority in the

⁹⁷ "Bogotá Bomb Attempt Fails," *NYT*, 28 Nov. 1963; "2 GI's Are Targets of Latins' Attacks," *NYT*, 25 Aug. 1963.

⁹⁸ "Bomb in U.S. Bogotá Office," *NYT*, 30 Jan. 1965.

⁹⁹ "Poderosa Bomba Estalla en el Colombo-Americano: Destruído el Salon de Actas del Plantel," *Diario de la Costa* (Cartagena), 3 Sep. 1963.

¹⁰⁰ "Realizaciones Culturales," Sep. 1963, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

¹⁰¹ Acta (29 Nov. 1963), Actas2, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

¹⁰² "Blast in Colombia Kills American and Three Others," *NYT*, 5 Aug. 1966; Acta (6 June 1966), Actas2, CCA/Bogotá MSS.

late 1970s. From then forward, as the phenomenon of violence in Colombia entered its drug phase, the Centro Colombo-Americano in Medellín suffered destructive bombings along with other institutions across the city.¹⁰³ By that time, security had also become an important consideration for the families of the Colegio Cristóbal Colón [The Christopher Columbus School] in Medellín as it had for the families of children at each of the American schools across the nation.

Conclusion

Cold War diplomacy strengthened and expanded cross-border infrastructure that linked Colombian and US educational and cultural communities. Anticommunism was common political ground for Bogotá and Washington, and strong collaboration between the governments was reflected in the educational, cultural and informational programs that had evolved during World War II and the first half of the Cold War. By the 1950s, mass media programming was centered squarely on a persuasive mission --to convince Colombians (and the world) to reject communism and look to the US as model of capitalist modernity. Mutual understanding as a policy objective was effectively replaced in USIA media programs, and the goal was now to foster understanding of the US and its Cold War policies.

Examining the implementation of the USIA film program in Colombia, the agency's non-theatrical screenings projected an anticommunist message to enormous numbers of people. Because there was consensus between governments about fighting the Cold War, anticommunist films from Washington were welcome in the nation. Film messages were honed and packaged in the US, but they did not stray from a general

¹⁰³ "Reseña Historica del Centro Colombo Americano de Medellín 1947-1966," Actas2/Med, CCA/Medellín MSS.

anticommunist and pro-capitalist narrative that was popular in the rhetoric of the National Front. Laboring classes and university students were important target audiences of the program because both governments agreed that these groups were most vulnerable to international communism. Yet, many USIA film screenings in Colombia were initiated by request from local educational and cultural groups. Choosing from a catalog, Colombians viewed US made films as educational and cultural resources. As they did, multiple local filters altered the original propaganda intent of the USIA productions.

By contrast, American schools and BNCs were locally directed institutions that retained their independence and commitment to mutual understanding. These institutions were not so easily manipulated to conform to short-term foreign policy objectives, and cultural reciprocity still conditioned their growth. Cultural funding and support from Washington was clearly crucial to such growth during these decades, but this should not mask that school and cultural centers responded in the majority to local, Colombian demand. In the communities that developed around these schools and cultural centers, middle and upper-class Colombians accessed US resources --funding and scholarships, cultural stages and classrooms, faculty exchanges and school-to-school collaborations-- not as means of connecting themselves to a foreign culture but as a means to develop their own life paths within the currents of modernity. Until the 1930s, the Colombian education system had been a restricted arena of privilege. Structured around elite needs, the system was sustained with heavy doses of European influences and resources. Beginning with Liberal education reforms of the 1930s, the system was expanded and European influences were displaced. By the end of that decade, Washington's new efforts

in cultural diplomacy were introducing US educational and cultural influences to a broad cross section of the nation, and the response was overwhelmingly positive.

Importantly, Colombian participation in the new transnational educational and cultural communities which developed around schools and cultural centers did not automatically create US loyalists. Clearly, it gave participants greater familiarity with the US, and many who were attracted to these institutions came to value US educational and cultural models, standards, and philosophies. Yet, local families and students affiliated with these institutions because they met their local educational and cultural needs. As their national education system struggled to expand across mid-century, Colombians used US cultural resources to build these institutions to their own advantage.

Chapter Eight

Transnational Catholicism and the Growth of US Influence in Colombia

This final chapter examines the role of religion in negotiating US cultural influence in Colombia during World War II and the first two decades of the Cold War. A source of conflict and antagonism that threatened to derail mutual understanding at the start of cultural diplomacy, religion was neutralized as an obstacle to Colombian-US relations around mid-century. The chapter demonstrates how collaborative educational efforts between Washington, the Colombian Catholic Church, and the US Catholic Church built bridges across the inter-American religious divide. The end result was crucial flexibility for Colombian-US relations in both political and cultural spheres as war became Cold War. Significantly, as the Colombian Catholic Church began to use US educational resources in reasserting its educational authority, it sanctioned and encouraged the spread of US cultural influence in the nation.

Diplomats and clergy, however, were not alone in negotiating the boundaries of the new inter-American religious culture. Around American schools, binational cultural centers and mass media programs, individuals and families were at the center of these negotiations. Across mid-century, as accelerated cultural change diminished the social and political influence of the Colombian Catholic Church, participants in emerging education and cultural communities constructed their own religious modernity. Examining religious negotiation at community levels, this chapter continues to evidence how common cultural interests conditioned the evolving Colombian-US relationship.

The first section of the chapter examines conflict that erupted between the Colombian Catholic Church and US Protestant missionaries at mid-century. Contemporary challenges to its educational, cultural and political authority fueled a forceful Church response to Protestant advances around the nation. At the parish level, conflict between Catholics and Protestant became entangled in the violence of the era and threatened then emerging US cultural diplomacy. Next, the chapter historicizes the active role of the US Catholic Church in shielding Washington's educational programs from attacks by influential Colombian Catholics. It demonstrates how collaboration between the two national Churches facilitated the spread of US educational and cultural influence. Finally, the chapter examines how American schools and US-sponsored cultural centers negotiated Catholicism at the institutional level.

Protestantism, Catholicism and US Educational Influence

As Michael LaRosa demonstrates, the 1930s brought “an avalanche of bad news” for the Colombian Catholic Church. Liberal victory at the polls brought an end to the Conservative Hegemony and precipitated unprecedented challenges to Church influence over national politics and culture. Constitutional changes affirmed the supremacy of the central state, and deference to Church authority from politicians declined. The diminishing cultural authority of the Church was evident in the new cycles of violence that erupted in the 1940s and continued unabated for two decades. In Bogotá in 1948, in the mob rioting that accompanied the assassination of populist leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, Church property was destroyed and its archives burned. As *la Violencia* spread across time and space claiming hundreds of thousands of lives, the Church proved unable to arrest the bloodletting. In 1958, with the establishment of the National Front as an

unprecedented bipartisan compromise, Conservatives formally marginalized their long-standing alliance with the Church. With the subsequent emergence of leftist Catholicism, liberation theology and radicalized priests during the 1960s, the avalanche gained momentum from within.¹

As LaRosa explains, the mid-century Church was forced to moderate its approaches to national politics and culture in the face of these and other challenges to its authority. In order to retain social and spiritual relevance amidst accelerated cultural change, factions within the Church broke with reactionary tradition and sought modern solutions to the nation's problems. Crucial to the initial moderation of the hierarchy was abandoning Liberalism as the primary target of its ire and targeting two new enemies, communism and Protestantism.² Church crusades against both of these enemies had specific implications for US cultural diplomacy in Colombia during war and cold war.

When the Cold War emerged, anticommunism provided an important point of convergence for Church activism and US cultural diplomacy. New opportunities arose to share resources and support each other's modernizing agendas. The Church was far from monolithic and within its ranks opponents of US cultural influence had been plentiful and vociferous from the 1930s forward. Still, a softening of broad clerical resistance to US culture was apparent by the early 1940s. An important indicator, as detailed throughout this study, was the clerical embrace of US cultural and informational resources during the war. Such engagement constituted a shift in broad Church opposition to US influence as diverse aspects of US culture became more widely recognizable and acceptable to its clergy. Moving into the Cold War, clergy continued to employ US cultural resources in

¹LaRosa, "Cleavages of the Cross," p. 12.

² Ibid., pp. 78-85.

support of their own anticommunist and modernizing agendas. Significantly, diverse factions within the Church used US resources as they worked to retain or reassert authority over Colombian culture and education.

The second of the Church's new enemies, Protestantism, was a deterrent to emerging US/Church collaboration. US Protestant missionaries had arrived in Latin America in increasing numbers during the 1930s and 1940s. In Colombia, where Church authority was on the decline, clergy framed Protestantism as an assault on national culture. Though missionaries were small in number during the period, their growth was sizeable. Their numbers had doubled in decade before the war, and global conflict spurred further growth. As Protestant proselytizers were displaced from areas of conflict in Asia and Africa, many looked to Latin America as fresh spiritual terrain. In the US, the OIAA's domestic Pan American programs, which fostered greater domestic interest about Latin America, likely contributed to fixing a new Protestant gaze on the region. Estimates place the number of Protestant missionaries in Colombia at approximately 300 (including ministers, wives, and teachers) by the mid-1940s. While Colombian followers numbered less than 8,000 at that time, the figure grew to an estimated 64,000 by 1966.³ Though they were an insignificant percentage of the national population, Colombian Protestants represented a growing threat to the already diminishing cultural authority of the Church.

Protestant proselytizing in Colombia took many forms, but like the OIAA, missionaries actively employed the communications technology of day. Initially, *The Voice of the Andes*, a radio station based in Ecuador, reached the dense population centers

³ David W. Hamblin, "A Social History of Protestantism in Colombia: 1930-2000" (Ph.D. diss., University of Massachusetts, 2003), pp. 65, 198-200.

of Andean Colombia, but missionary programming on local stations became common by the early 1940s. Missionaries also operated a boat along the Magdalena and Cauca rivers. Similar to the Sydney Ross Company's river boat, *The Good News* projected films at town docks. In addition, buses fitted with bookcases and sound equipment brought religious culture to rural villages.⁴ Occasionally, instances of proselytizing were confrontational and aggressive. Explicit attacks on Catholicism went to the extreme of charging the Church with keeping the people impoverished and vulnerable to communism. More controversial were direct Protestant condemnations of the veneration of the Virgin Mary, an especially pronounced feature of Latin American Catholicism.⁵ While such aggressive proselytizing was not the norm, it provided abundant fodder for Catholic reaction.

Notably, Catholics in Colombia were most outraged by Protestant participation in the field of education. Two high profile schools founded in the nineteenth century by US Protestants, the previously discussed Colegios Americanos at Bogotá and Barranquilla, had strong academic traditions and powerful Liberal defenders.⁶ These schools were a thorn in the side the Church, but it could do little about them. Easier targets were the smaller institutions that had appeared with the waves of Protestant missions of the 1930s and 1940s. Often small churches with nothing more than an attached classroom, these missions were located in both rural and urban areas and often focused on teaching literacy through the Bible. As discussed in chapter two, the 1942 Corry report had identified thirty-six such schools in Colombia, which were operated almost exclusively

⁴ Hamblin, "A Social History of Protestantism," pp. 79-82.

⁵ Christopher Abel, "Misiones protestantes en un Estado católico: Colombia en los años cuarenta y cincuenta," *Análisis Político* no. 50 (Jan-April 2004), pp. 10-15.

⁶ Among others, Liberal President Enrique Olaya Herrera had attended the school in Bogotá. Pablo Moreno, "La educación protestante durante la modernización de la educación en Colombia, 1869-1928," *Cristianismo y Sociedad* 107 (1991), pp. 69-87.

by US Presbyterian missionaries. Schools operated by other Protestant denominations from a variety of other nations added to the total, and the number continued to grow during the war. Estimates suggest that more than two hundred small schools served upwards of 12,000 Colombian students by the mid-1940s. Importantly, families who sent their children to these schools did not necessarily identify as Protestants; with classrooms in short supply, Catholic parents were willing to take advantage of all educational options for their children.⁷

In the early 1940s, as clerical rhetoric against Protestant missionaries amplified, US cultural diplomacy was caught in the middle. In Bogotá, the board of the newly established Centro Colombo-Americano aggressively defended itself against accusations that it was spreading Protestant propaganda. When a priest from a parish just a few blocks away from the center warned his parishioners of the Protestant intentions of new English teaching centers in the city, the Colombian president of the board contacted the priest's superiors to correct the record. Stressing the center's Colombian identity and its Catholic credentials, Jorge Obando detailed the Colombo-Americano's extensive collaboration with Catholic academics and educators during its first year. He asked that such collaboration continue. Monseñor Emilio Brigard, on the verge of assuming the office of Bishop of Bogotá, assured the board that he would correct the record.⁸

Outside the Colombo-Americano, the situation was more volatile, and reports of violent attacks and property damage to Protestant churches and schools were registered with the US embassy. By all assessments the incidences of violence were limited, but

⁷ Hamblin, "A Social History of Protestantism," p. 107.

⁸ Jorge Obando to Monseñor Brigard, 2 Aug. 1943, LH1, CCA/Bogotá MSS. In the same location see: Monseñor Brigard to Jorge Obando, 3 Aug. 1943; Monseñor Brigard to Jorge Obando, 4 Aug. 1943; Carl Sauer to Mr. Ambassador, 12 Aug. 1943.

they spread alarm among diplomats who were focused so tightly on securing Pan American unity. The embassy met with US missionaries to acknowledge their concerns, but also asked Washington to quietly curtail Protestant emigration from the US. At home, the State Department was feeling pressure from all sides. Some saw the Protestant expansion into Latin America as a great threat to hemispheric cooperation. In a controversial book, John W. White called Protestant missionaries “Our Good Neighbor Hurdle” and saw them as violating the US pledge against interference in the internal affairs of Latin American nations: “we continue sending our missionary agents to interfere in their internal affairs at the same time that we are fighting with everything at our command to prevent Hitler’s agents from doing the same in our country.”⁹ An enthusiastic Pan Americanist, White argued that Catholicism was the foundation of Latin American culture and the essence of *Hispanidad*. He declared that any effort to “win our southern neighbors away from their faith will be self-defeating, politically as well as religiously.”¹⁰ He advised restriction of Protestant émigrés to the region.

Against such arguments, US Protestants leaders invoked the language of “mutual understanding” and reminded the State Department that “thousands of Latin Americans welcome the Protestant Church and are grateful to the country from which its missionaries have come.”¹¹ They were joined by Latin Americans like Benjamin Subercaseaux, a Chilean writer, who supported greater religious freedom in the region; “the act of offering us now a limitation of freedom of belief as a proof of Good Neighborliness is like serving us a totalitarian dish to reward our good anti-Nazi

⁹ White, *Our Good Neighbor Hurdle*, pp. 201-202.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹¹ “Reformed Synod Defends Missions,” *NYT*, 29 Aug. 1943. See also “Presbyterians Ask Freedom to Expand,” *NYT*, 1 June 1944.

feelings.”¹² Protestant voices nervously but loudly noted the growing influence of the US Catholic Church in hemispheric foreign policy. They demanded that Secretary of State Hull reject public calls to his department by National Catholic Welfare Conference to impede US Protestant missions in Latin America.¹³

Persecution of Protestants in Colombia rose again to the level of diplomatic concern during the early 1950s. Coinciding with the peak periods of *la Violencia*, the Colombian Evangelical Confederation alleged that their missionaries and faithful were suffering death and injury at the hands of Catholics: their churches burned, their ministers jailed, and their schools closed. They charged priest involvement and government complicity. As they had been doing for years, confederation members continued to pressure the embassy to take up their cause, but the phenomenon of violence was by then so widespread that persecution of Protestants was only a very minor subset of the general bloodshed.¹⁴ In reality, the embassy could do very little. And it didn't want to antagonize the sitting Conservative president, a man who had been the most influential and vocal critic of a US-Colombian alliance during the war. Laureano Gómez's distaste for US cultural influence was well known. Indeed, he told the *New York Times* in 1941 that North American culture had always “destroyed” Latin American culture “whenever the two have met,” and he made clear that Colombians did not “want to be culturally conquered” and would “defend our culture against absorption.”¹⁵ Now, in the early Cold War as president of the nation, staunchly anticommunist Gómez was a developing US

¹² C.A. Hutchinson, “Religious Impasse,” *NYT*, 29 Aug. 1943.

¹³ Spruille Braden, *Diplomats and Demagogues: The Memoirs of Spruille Braden* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1971), pp. 209-211; Abel, “Misiones protestantes en un Estado católico,” pp. 10-11; “Presbyterians Ask Freedom to Expand,” *NYT*, 1 June 1944; “Religion Not Involved, Hull Says,” *NYT*, 27 May 1944.

¹⁴ Abel, “Misiones protestantes en un Estado católico,” pp. 15-18.

¹⁵ Harold Callender, “Colombian Chiefs Hesitant on Bases,” *NYT*, 24 April 1941.

ally who had committed Colombians troops to Korea. Washington had nothing to gain in making an issue of the Protestants' allegations and widespread violence affecting thousands upon thousands of Colombians provided it with cover.

The missionaries did find greater support in the US press. Over the course of the 1950s, accusations and rebuttals over protestant persecution in Colombia kept printing presses in both nations active.¹⁶ Though later historical analysis evidenced some instances of Catholic clergy inciting this violence, it is clear that US Protestants and their followers were not disproportionately victimized during the period.¹⁷ Also clear is that this issue lingered threateningly over educational and cultural initiatives of US cultural diplomacy as they evolved during the Cold War.

When Conservatives had returned to national power after the war, the influence of the Church in political affairs increased substantially. Highly charged rhetoric against secular and Protestant schooling increased. Blaming the violence on non-Catholic and lay education promoted by Liberals, Conservatives reasserted Church authority over national culture; they allowed wide latitude for the hierarchy of the Church in educational affairs.¹⁸ Conservative factions within the Church and their supporters were emboldened by their regenerating political alliance. In a 1951 pastoral letter, for example, Colombian bishops boldly declared that Colombian parents who sent their children to non-Catholic

¹⁶ For the most widely circulated rebuttals in Colombia see: Eduardo Ospina, S.J., *The Protestant Denominations in Colombia: A Historical Sketch with a Particular Study of the So Called "Religious Persecution"* (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional de Colombia, 1954) and *El Problema de Protestantismo en Colombia. Por un Sacerdote Católico Convertido del Protestantismo*, 19th ed. (Bogotá: Cooperativa Mariano Nacional de Colombia, 1958). For an example of inflammatory charges circulated in the US press, see "Religious Abuses Grow in Colombia," *NYT*, 24 Jan. 1956.

¹⁷ Hamblin, "A Social History of Protestantism in Colombia," p. 240; James Ernest Goff, "The Persecution of Protestant Christians in Colombia, 1948 to 1958: with an investigation of its background and causes" (master's thesis, San Francisco Theological Seminary, 1965); Suzanne Marie Claire Daily, "United States Reactions to the Persecution of Protestants in Colombia during the 1950s" (thesis, St. Louis University, 1971).

¹⁸ Editorial, *El Siglo* (Bogotá), 16 Jan. 1949.

schools were making themselves suspect of heresy and candidates for excommunication. Claiming secular and Protestant schools worked against the integrity of Christian life, the bishops were formalizing a threat many priests had been making for years at the local level. Education in Colombia, they declared had to be Catholic.¹⁹ Their threats were repeatedly issued at regional and national levels throughout the 1950s.²⁰ Heresy was a powerful charge, and while the Church did not have the power it held before the 1930s, all educational institutions had to take notice.

Clarifying precisely where heresy was in evidence, the Jesuit editors of *Javeriana Magazine* published a list of non-Catholic schools in Colombia. Labeling the schools “the enemy in sight” [*el enemigo en la vista*] the magazine identified ninety-seven schools that were “disassociated” with the nation and its religious unity. Most were small Protestant church schools including many that had been noted, a decade early, in the Corry report. But the two highly regarded Protestant secondary schools in Bogotá and Barranquilla made the list as well. More significantly, so, too, did the Centro Colombo-Americano in Bogotá, one of the few cultural centers on the list. The Colegio Karl C. Parrish, Barranquilla’s American school, was included as well. As an educational institution on the Caribbean coast, Colegio Parrish was not alone. Indicative of the Catholic Church’s historical absence on that coast, the consequential lack of schools, and the resulting positive reception afforded Protestants who offered instruction there, more than a third of the schools on the list were in the Caribbean region. Prominent were the Baptist-run schools of highly-literate, English-speaking archipelago of San Andrés and Providencia;

¹⁹ “Pastoral Colectiva del Episcopados Colombiano,” *Revista Javeriana* 37, no. 181 (February 1952), pp. 3-9; “El Cardenal-Arzbispo Prohíbe a Los Padres Matricular a sus Hijos en Colegios No Católicos,” *El Siglo* (Bogotá), 1 Dec. 1951

²⁰ *Revista Javeriana* 45, no. 221 (Feb. 1956), p. 44; “Pastoral Colectiva de 1958,” *Revista Javeriana* 49, no. 241 (Feb-Mar 1959), p. 98

the Church and the central state were determined to Colombianize these distant islands and linguistic and religious conversion had long been central to their plan.²¹ The Conservative government collaborated with the Church and forced many of the “enemy” schools, including small church schools and all of those on San Andrés and Providencia, to close. Kept informed by the Protestant mission lobby, the US press detailed the closings, and *Time* magazine opined that “sensitive Colombians may be astonished to learn that their country is well on the way to earning a reputation for bigotry second, among Western nations, only to Spain.”²² For his part, then-dictator Rojas Pinilla dismissed criticism, and in the useful parlance of the Cold War justified school closures on the grounds that Protestant schools destroyed Colombian religious unity and opened a door to communism.²³

Colombia’s ardent supporters of Catholic nationalism applauded the regenerating Conservative-Church alliance in the 1950s, and they also called for bolder steps to rid the nation of creeping Anglo-Saxon influences. In advocating a “return to Hispanidad” in the mold of Spain’s dictator, General Franco, Hugo Velasco called for a holy war between Catholics and Protestants.²⁴ His war would be fought on many fronts, but he saw classrooms as the most important of modern theaters. Lamenting Colombia’s new educational orientation toward North America, Velasco argued for a national school

²¹ “El enemigo en la vista,” *Revista Javeriana* 36, no. 180/Supplement (November 1951), pp. 166-171.

²² Quote is from “No School Today,” *Time*, 19 April 1954. See also: “Colombia Probe Spreads: Tie to Protestant Missions is Charged by Bogotá Paper,” *NYT*, 8 Oct. 1950; “Protestant Charges Abuses in Colombia,” *NYT*, 17 June 1952; “Colombia Closes Nine Schools,” *NYT*, 20 Oct. 1952; “Colombia Bans Protestant School,” *NYT*, 18 Feb. 1953; “Colombia to Reopen Schools,” *NYT*, 6 May 1954; Daily, *United States Reactions to the Persecution of Protestants in Colombia during the 1950s*.

²³ “Colombia: Uprooting Protestantism,” *Time*, 28 May 1956.

²⁴ Hugo Velasco A., *Retorno a la Hispanidad* (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura Hispánica, 1953), p. 52. Velasco’s diatribe is a response to Hugo LaTorre Cabal and other Liberals who rejected hispanidad as backward and unapologetically saw Colombian modernity in US models. Hugo LaTorre Cabal, *La Hispanidad* (Bogotá, Editorial Kelly, 1950).

system built around spiritual education. Yankee educational models had no place in such a system because they were Protestant in origin, prioritized technical over spiritual knowledge, and aimed at worldly and material gain.²⁵ Velasco also vehemently argued the necessity of stopping Latin American enrollments in US universities because such an education indoctrinated young male minds into a commercialized, Protestant culture of decline. Even worse for Velasco, Yankee cultural imperialism emasculated young men and gave them an “idiotic and effeminate soul” [*alma imbecile y afemindada*].²⁶ The Latin American student in the US was ignorant of his own culture yet he had...

*deep and exhaustive knowledge of the personal life of Rita Haywood [sic] and knows with mathematic precision the number of divorces in the town of Reno. Moreover, without seeing it, he distinguishes the make of an automobile in motion and even the model and year of its manufacture.*²⁷

Simultaneously, other Catholic nationalists advocated more moderate approaches to curbing US cultural influence. Jesuit Gustavo Amigo understood that Colombia's educational shift toward the US was not going to be reversed anytime soon. The study of English was too popular, and US universities and scholarships were too abundant. The priest recognized that technical and career programs in the US appealed to many young Colombians because they were disillusioned by the limited educational offerings in their own nation. Instead of futile attempts at ending the northward migration of students, Amigo wanted to increase Catholic influence over the process. His was a strategy of cooptation as opposed to open conflict; he represented the moderate voices within the Church that offered modernizing alternatives to reactionary stances. Catholic Universities

²⁵ Velasco A., *Retorno a la Hispanidad*, p. 54.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

²⁷ “...tiene profundos y agotadores conocimientos sobre la vida íntima de Rita Haywood y lleva con precisión matemática el número de divorcios en la población de Reno. Otrosí, distingue sin mirar, la marca de automóvil en marcha y aún más, el año y el modelo de fabricación.” Velasco A., *Retorno a la Hispanidad*, p. 54.

in the US, he argued, needed to open their enrollments to accommodate more Latin Americans. They needed to compete actively with public and secular institutions to attract these students. He also called on the US Catholic Church to open Catholic cultural centers for foreign students so to support religious solidarity and uninterrupted religious practice.²⁸ Certainly, educational experiences in the US would introduce the Latin American student to new cultural influences, but Amigo believed there was no reason why those influences could not be more Catholic. As detailed below, influential members of the clergy in both nations agreed.

US Cultural Diplomacy and the Transnational Catholic Church

After the return of the Conservatives to national power in 1946, many Colombian Liberals were purged from educational bureaucracies at the national and departmental levels. The Church had been granted seats on important educational boards and commissions. The most conservative clerical voices, especially the Jesuits of Javeriana University, enjoyed considerable access to national political leadership and educational policy makers. Yet, as compared to the pre-1930 period, this restored, mid-century authority of the Church over education was only partial; it was more heavily symbolic than functional. Like Liberals, Conservatives wanted a broad national education system that supported their goals of capitalist modernity. Their rhetoric aside, they were not looking to prioritize spiritual education, and they resisted efforts to reform the national curriculum along that line. Notably, they even rebuffed efforts from within the Catholic lobby to reduce the priority status of the English language in secondary programs.²⁹

²⁸ Gustavo Amigo, S.J., "Problemas del Mundo Hispánico: Los Estudiantes Católicos Hispanoamericanos en Estados Unidos," *Revista Javeriana* 33, no. 162 (March 1950), p. 93.

²⁹ Helg, *La Educación en Colombia*, pp. 216-224.

The church had two primary mechanisms for asserting authority over non-Catholic schools. Excommunication was the first; a new Ministry of National Education requirement that all Catholic students be provided with religious instruction in school was the second. This second requirement became the legal justification for many of the school closures of the decade, but a few prominent Protestant schools successfully fought back.³⁰ They avoided closure with official policies of not enrolling Catholic students. Suggesting the developing indifference among some Colombian Catholics to Church threats, the Protestant-founded Colegio Americano in Bogotá found many of its Catholic parents suddenly identified their children as religious “independents.” All of a sudden the school was enrolling a surprising number of Buddhists as well.³¹ Comparatively, Colombian parents at the US-sponsored American schools were not so cavalier, and their school boards took the excommunication threats and curriculum demands more seriously. For the existing binational schools in Bogotá, Barranquilla, Medellín and Cartagena, the challenge was how to remain non-sectarian (and, thus, eligible for US funding) while also responding to the needs of the local, educated Catholic Colombian families. As they negotiated their institutional relationship with Catholicism, these schools received valuable assistance and influential support from the US Catholic Church.

From its start, Bogotá’s Colegio Nueva Granada had arranged after school, Catholic religious instruction for its Colombian students. Classes were held off campus, paid separately from tuition, and directed by a locally resident priest from the US. Through the 1940s, the school made similar arrangements for religious instruction for Protestant students, who were nationals of the US or other foreign countries. Because the

³⁰ “Religious Abuses Grow in Colombia,” *NYT*, 24 Jan. 1956; Jaime Eustasio Pieschacón, S.J., “Establecimientos de Educación de los Protestantes,” *Revista Javeriana* 56, no. 276 (Julio 1961), p. 16.

³¹ “Church v. Schools,” *Time*, 26 Dec. 1955.

number of Colombian students was on the rise and approaching parity with US students, threats of excommunication and talk of the “enemies in sight” made all parents very nervous; if Colombian families were to withdraw their children, the stability of the young school would be at stake. Fortunately, however, the school had the ear of the US ambassador, whose Foreign Service staff had children in the school. At the direct request of the embassy, Cardinal Francis Spellman of New York, the leading voice of US Catholicism at mid-century, made a high profile visit to the school in late 1951. Touring Colombia and the Andean region at the height of controversies over Protestant schools, Spellman appeared at the colegio and gave it his endorsement. Coming just days after Colombia’s bishops had issued their pastoral letter regarding excommunication, the visit was powerful political theater. And it eased the Colombian parents’ concerns.³²

Spellman’s advocacy on behalf of the non-sectarian educational institution neutralized its vulnerability to attack in the heated atmosphere of day. Importantly though, this was not an isolated example of US Catholic diplomacy in support of Washington’s hemispheric policies. The US Catholic Church had been an active participant in US cultural diplomacy from the start, and it played a crucial role in breaking down Latin American stereotypes about the US. Well before Spellman’s timely appearance in 1951, diplomats had regularly turned to him to help the US establish its Catholic credentials in the region. Enthusiastically complying, Spellman had often sent Bishop John O’Hara, president of Notre Dame University, to the region in support of Washington’s Pan American campaign. At the direct request of the US embassy, O’Hara had arrived in Bogotá in the early 1940s to help quell the anti-US sentiment stoked by the activities of Protestant missionaries. He was a logical choice for such missions. A

³² Leonard, “Historical Factors,” pp. 104-105.

member of the official US delegation to the Pan American conference at Lima in 1938, he had been raised in Uruguay by US parents in the Foreign Service, traveled widely in the region, and spoke fluent Spanish. Of the Church and an outspoken advocate for it, he understood the power of religious symbolism in Latin and even advocated for adoration of a common blessed virgin – “Our Lady of America.” In the realm of education, O’Hara encouraged Latin American Catholics to send their brightest students to Catholic universities in the US. He similarly encouraged US university students to study in Latin America’s Catholic universities.³³ Through O’Hara, Spellman and their national church, US cultural diplomacy for Latin America passed through influential US Catholic filters.

Importantly, both O’Hara and Spellman saw education as way to counter the narrow framing of US culture as Protestant. In collaborative efforts with leaders of the Latin American Church, they encouraged US Catholic orders to establish new schools in the region to counter Protestantism. Because Catholic missionaries, like their Protestant counterparts, were also being displaced from theaters of war in Asia and Africa, many educators were available.³⁴ Such transnational Catholic efforts enjoyed the support of the US government, and the first schools founded by US Catholic orders in Peru and Chile received early assistance from the OIAA in forms of books, maps, and classroom materials.³⁵ In Colombia, where several US orders arrived after the war, such new

³³ On O’Hara’s Latin American and anti-protestant credentials, see: John F. O’Hara, CSC, “Protestant Activities in South America,” *Catholic World* 69 (May 1924); John F. O’Hara, “A Frank Word about South American History,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 2, no. 4 (Jan. 1917), pp. 433-436; Thomas T. McAvoy, S.S.C., *Father O’Hara of Notre Dame: The Cardinal Archbishop of Philadelphia* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967), pp. 174-219. On Spellman’s role in Colombia and O’Hara’s visit to Bogotá at the request of Ambassador Spruille Braden, see Braden, *Diplomats and Demagogues*, pp. 209-211. Spellman’s relationship with Colombian President Ospina Pérez is noted: “Perez Here from Canada,” *NYT*, 27 June 1946; “Spellman Bid Confirmed,” *NYT*, 17 July 1946; “Spellman Reaches Guayaquil,” *NYT*, 3 Dec. 1951.

³⁴ “Catholic Heroes,” *Time*, 30 Mar. 1942; “Maryknoll Sends 100 Missionaries,” *NYT*, 29 Nov. 1942.

³⁵ Corry, “Memoir,” p. 27

Catholic schools meet a variety of local Catholic objectives as well. Newly returned to power, Conservatives had explicitly turned to the Church to expand the number of classrooms in the nation. Taking up the charge, the Church did as it had always done and tapped into its transnational network to import religious orders to found and operate new institutions.³⁶ However, reflecting the contemporary shift in Colombian cultural orientation toward the US, the Church not only brought in European priests and nuns but English-speaking orders from the US as well. As it did, the Colombian Catholic Church encouraged further growth of US influence in national education and culture.

In the 1940s, nuns of the Marymount order from Tarrytown, NY, were formally invited by Bogotá's Archbishop to open schools for upper-class girls. Most of the existing secondary schools for girls in Colombia were then run by the Church; historically, the state prioritized education of boys while making few provisions for girls. For the daughters of the non-elite, post-primary schooling was often non-existent. And while Catholic colegios for girls from elite families were more plentiful, there were not enough of them to meet growing demand. By the 1940s, Church leaders had developing concerns for the number of wealthy Colombian families who were sending their daughter abroad for secondary schooling. Recognizing the strong interest of Colombian families in US-style education in English, the Archbishop wanted to specifically provide domestic alternatives to sending Catholic girls to the US. Marymount nuns, who were usually US and Irish nationals, opened secondary schools for girls in Bogotá, Barranquilla, and Medellín beginning in the late 1940s. Soon, other orders followed under the encouragement of both the Colombian and US Catholic hierarchy. Among others,

³⁶ Alfredo Molano and César Vera, *Evolución de la Política Educativa en el siglo XX: 1900-1957* (Bogotá: Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, 1982), pp. 119-176.

Viatorian brothers from Illinois and Benedictine brothers from North Dakota founded English-speaking secondary schools for boys in Colombia.³⁷ Such schools limited the number of Colombian students who studied in US high schools, but the overall impact was minimal. Completely halting Colombian exchange students from studying in the US would not be possible, and so other alternatives were sought to make their experiences abroad more Catholic. As one solution, Catholic leaders in both nations collaborated to place Colombian secondary exchange students in US Catholic, rather than public or secular private high schools. Scholarships provide by the National Catholic Educational Association of the US to Colombian students were an effort in that direction, and students from Colombia's various American schools were among those who received the scholarships.³⁸

Negotiating Transnational Catholicism

The Catholic Culture of Colombia's American Schools

As American schools developed across the 1950s and 1960s, negotiating Catholicism was an ongoing process. While each school exhibited deference to the Church, the degrees of deference varied greatly across region just as Church influence varied. Colombianization of the schools' student bodies, boards of directors, and PTAs meant that Catholics formed both a majority of the members and the influential leaders within the school communities. Bogotá's Colegio Nueva Granada was an exception to this norm because it retained a US student majority (54%) through the 1960s.³⁹ Balancing religiosity in the school was a diplomatic dance because the school was closely tied to the

³⁷ Terry Lee Burgess, "Teacher In-Service Needs of English/Spanish Bilingual Schools of Bogotá as Perceived by their Academic Staffs" (PhD diss., University of Alabama, 1979), pp. 5-6.

³⁸ Leonard, "Historical Factors," p. 117.

³⁹ *Association of Colombian-American Bi-National Schools* (Barranquilla: 1966), CNG MSS, Archivos Muertos, F: Col.-Carib-Amer. Schools Association/Pamphlets.

formal diplomacy of the capital. As evidenced in the last chapter, US Foreign Service, military and development agency families were reliant on the school in the immediate post-war, and this only deepened with the Cold War. Given their proximity to the diplomatic stage, it was in the best interest of the school board and administrators to keep the school outside religious controversy. They did so by incorporating Catholic instruction and some Catholic cultural traditions into school programs.

In the early 1950s, Catholic instruction within the Bogotá school became necessary to avoid public confrontation with the Church. Offsite, after-school Catholic instruction which had been initiated at the founding of the colegio would no longer suffice. At the same time as the Catholic-Conservative alliance was regenerating, such instruction also became essential toward gaining Ministry of National Education approval of the school's developing secondary program.⁴⁰ Thus, did each grade have a religion teacher who was usually a young female and often a native English-speaking nun. A locally-residing US Catholic priest, the chaplain for Bogotá's US Catholics, served as a teacher as well. His mission was religious but his cultural influence was broader; he was also the school's basketball coach. Because the student body included a high number of Protestants as well, the board continued its original policy of hiring Protestant ministers for voluntary religious instruction. The local chaplain of the Protestant diplomatic community and his wife provided religious instruction in the school for those children whose parents desired it. With close ties to the diplomatic culture of the city, the school gradually embraced a role as an US educational model of religious tolerance. Indeed, it was impressed upon teacher's that a "basic purpose" of the school was to "stress

⁴⁰ *Colegio Nueva Granada Student Guide: 1964*, CNG MSS, Archivos Muertos, F: Student Handbooks – CNG – 1964-1978.

tolerance and understanding” of all religions.⁴¹ School ceremonies, as manifestations of the institutions religious culture, modeled religious tolerance with an air of diplomatic formality. Catholic priests were commonly flanked by Protestant ministers at the school’s public functions: graduations, award ceremonies, and inaugurations of new buildings. It was not unusual for a local rabbi to join such significant assemblies when a member of his congregation was involved.⁴²

The Columbus School in Medellín more singularly embraced Catholicism. Opened in 1947 to support North American families employed by a Canadian mining company, the school grew amidst the strong Catholic tradition of its region. With just 20 students at founding, the Columbus School had grown to 600 students by the mid-1960s and three-quarters were Colombian.⁴³ Given the strength of the church in Antioquia and its historically active role in education there, the school offered Catholic religion classes on campus from the start. Fees for these classes were paid separately from tuition, and this allowed the board to remain eligible for US grants. In contrast to Bogotá, where diplomacy conditioned community culture, this school community felt little pressure to showcase religious freedom. While Catholic religion classes were voluntary, no Protestant religious instruction was offered. A priest on staff oversaw the religious program and this extended to preparation of entire classes of children for receiving Catholic sacraments. This brought a more serious level of Catholic ritual and pageantry into the school as it met the practical religious needs of the community. As the school

⁴¹ *Teacher’s Manual - Colegio Nueva Granda*, September 1963, CNG MSS, Archivos Muertos, F: Teachers’ Manual.

⁴² Photographs of school ceremonies, *Andean 1960* (Bogotá: Editorial El Catolicismo, 1960), pp. 16-28.

⁴³ *Association of Colombian-American Bi-National Schools* (Barranquilla: 1966), CNG MSS, Archivos Muertos, F: Col.-Carib-Amer. Schools Association/Pamphlets.

grew and added a secondary program, university-educated nuns from orders in the US were often brought to teach religion.⁴⁴

Because Catholicism as a political and cultural force was weaker on coast, the Colegio Karl C. Parrish had historically maintained institutional indifference to Catholicism. The founding board chose not to offer religious classes and the tradition was well established at mid-century. This explains why the school was included on the enemies list in the 1951. To avoid more direct conflict with the Church, the school soon moved away from its strictly secular tradition and began to offer voluntary religious classes for Catholic students. Here, too, education ministry approval was necessary for retaining Colombian students who were 70% of the 600 strong student body by the 1960s.⁴⁵ Still, religion did not manifest broadly in ceremonial religiosity of the Parrish school as it did in Medellín and Bogotá. As just one telling indicator, no prayer or blessing was included in formal graduation ceremonies.⁴⁶

Indicative of the new politico-religious reality of the early 1950s, the new American School on the coast at Cartagena recognized the need to appease the Church. Opened in 1952, amidst the binational controversies over Protestant schools, the Colegio Jorge Washington was deferential to the Church from the start. US and Colombian business interests had founded the school, and it quickly developed a Colombian student majority.⁴⁷ The school scheduled on-campus religion classes during the school day to comply precisely with new Ministry of National Education mandates, and administrators

⁴⁴ Prospectus “The Columbus School,” 1961, in *Historia – The Columbus School*, Communication Office, The Columbus School, Medellín, Colombia (hereafter *Historia/Colon MSS*); School Inspection Report, Departamento de Antioquia, Sección de Educación Pública, 19 May 1952, *Historia/Colon MSS*; Acta (February 1964), *Historia/Colon MSS*.

⁴⁵ *Association of Colombian-American Bi-National Schools* (Barranquilla: 1966).

⁴⁶ School graduation ceremonies are important forums for the construction of school identity. Commencement Programs (July 1944 thru June 1969), KCP MSS, F: *Karl C. Parrish School, 1938-2004*.

⁴⁷ *Association of Colombian-American Bi-National Schools* (Barranquilla: 1966).

contracted with a local Colombian priest to teach classes and prepare students for first communion. There, as at Medellín, Catholic rites also became part of the pageantry of the school, and eventually masses were offered on Holy Days in the common area where assemblies and recess were held.⁴⁸ Participation in all religious activities, however, remained voluntary.

American schools were also part of the broader negotiation between the Church and society over the social role of women. Schools are educational infrastructure on which national and regional gender systems rest, and traditional Catholic framing of women as modest mothers and wives gave the Church tremendous influence over the number of classrooms open to women. Pre-1930s, when Church hegemony over education was more secure, secondary school options for girls were almost exclusively within Catholic institutions. State-run normal schools were an option for a few, but otherwise women's choices for education and training were severely limited. Change was initiated with Liberal education reforms of the 1930s. Slowly as Colombian educational infrastructure expanded beyond Church control, gender systems in schools would begin to look less Catholic. Yet, while the doors of colegios and universities were legally opened to women, the gender balance was slow to change because coeducation at the secondary level was strongly opposed by the Church. Indeed, many girls were refused admission to schools with all male student bodies, and some who were admitted were later driven out by verbal assaults from local parish priests.⁴⁹

While Liberals expressed commitment to equal education and even codified the principle in law, Church pressure with regard to coeducation proved stronger. By the

⁴⁸ Acta #14 (5 Oct. 1953) and Acta #15 (19 Oct. 1953), LA, CJW/Cartagena MSS; "Momento Social," *El Diario de la Costa* (Cartagena), 25 May 1968.

⁴⁹ Helg, *La Educación en Colombia*, pp. 268-69.

early 1940s, the Liberal government gave in to the pressure; it established separate requirements for a feminine bachillerato curriculum and encouraged the establishment of sex-segregated colegios that could meet exploding educational demand from girls. The curriculum still met the necessary requirements for university admission, but it diversified content to include courses in areas considered sex-appropriate: domestic economy, diet, and childrearing.⁵⁰ Because new secondary schools for girls were established slowly, more and more young women (and their families) of the middle and upper classes turned to education abroad. And an important option for those who chose to remain at home were the coeducational programs offered by American and other private, secular schools.

Coeducation was not new to Colombia. At the primary school level in rural areas, where educational resources were sparse, mixed sex classrooms were the norm. Such schools were, however, rare in urban centers, and they were almost nonexistent at the secondary level. When Conservatives regained national leadership after the war, Church opposition to coeducation in secondary programs was strengthened as a Ministry of National Education decree back it up. In the 1950s, when Bogotá's Colegio Nueva Granda was in the process of adding a secondary program to accommodate growing enrollment, division of students by sex was not financially feasible. Yet, the school was located in the capital and its board had to walk a fine diplomatic line to avoid controversy. The school ran a small secondary program out of the basement of the principal's rented home, and classes were mixed. However, a rope divided the basement classroom and a curtain could, if necessary, be pulled to separate one side of it from the other. Though students moved about the room freely and seating was mixed, each was

⁵⁰ German Arciniegas, *Memoria del señor Ministro de Educación Nacional, 1946*, p. xxxii.

assigned an official seat on the sex-appropriate side of the room that they could quickly return to when a ministry official appeared.⁵¹

In actuality, outside the capital there was less interest and little effort by the regional governments to limit coeducational programs. On the Caribbean, part of the attraction of the schools at Cartagena and Barranquilla was that they offered coeducational programs and made few curriculum distinctions between the sexes. The schools marketed themselves to Colombian families who were looking for a modern coeducational model. In Catholic Medellín, it was no different. There, the Colegio Colón had a mixed student body from the start, and Antioqueño education officials held it up as model for other schools to emulate. Reflecting the Catholic morals of the region, inspectors closely observed the mixing of the sexes during the school day, but they did not pressure the school to make changes. They were particularly satisfied that interaction among the sexes was strictly supervised during recess.⁵² (In later generations, political leaders even took to honoring the school for introducing coeducation to the city.⁵³) Medellín had a long tradition of embracing educational and capitalist modernity and this did not conflict with traditional Catholic values. As long as Catholic sensibilities were demonstrated in administration of technical education programs and commercial schools, in the personnel policies and on the floors of textile factories that employed women, and in the classrooms and common areas of coeducational secondary schools, the Church in

⁵¹ Leonard, "Historical Factors," p. 115.

⁵² School Inspection Report, Departamento de Antioquia, Sección de Educación Pública, 19 May 1952, *Historia/Colon MSS*.

⁵³ Resolución No. 2101 of 26 de Noviembre de 1997, Gobernación de Antioquia, 26 Nov. 1997, *Historia/Colon MSS*; Resolución No. 5213 of 18 de Noviembre de 1997, Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 18 Nov. 1997, *Historia/Colon MSS*.

Medellín did not resist modernizing trends.⁵⁴ In the 1950s the only private schools forced to segregate existing mixed sex classrooms were the high profile Protestant schools that were historical targets of the Church.⁵⁵

Centros Colombo-Americanos and Catholic Culture

Like American schools, the Centros Colombo-Americanos were also involved in negotiating transnational Catholicism. Yet, while schools accepted a role in spiritual, Catholic instruction, Colombo-Americano cultural centers usually avoided programming with explicit religious content. Religion was rarely a lecture topic because public controversy was easy to spark on a diplomatic stage. At the end of the war, for example, a teacher at the Bogotá center, Lionel Landry, gave a lecture on religious freedom in the US. A Catholic himself, Landry posited that the “the greatness of a nation, depends on its morals.” His assertion was that US strength was tied to its religious diversity. His lecture received swift criticism from the Catholic press in the capital which pointed to divorce as a sign of decaying US morals.⁵⁶ Such negative publicity made the Bogotá center very cautious about engaging religious discourse, but its overall programming hardly denied a voice for Catholicism. Jesuit academics, among others, gave regular lectures at the center on a wide range of topics; Church authorities were honored guests at many of these lectures. As detailed above, priests and nuns were active participants in the center’s

⁵⁴ On the Church’s involvement with progressive educational initiatives in Antioquia, see Londoño-Vega, *Religion, Culture and Society in Colombia*. On the growth in commercial, technical and engineering schools in Antioquia and Colombia see Frank Safford, *The Ideal of the Practical: Colombia’s Struggle to form a technical elite* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976); Helg, *La Educación en Colombia*, pp. 89-97. On the gender and textile factory labor, see Farnsworth-Alvear, *Dulcinea in the Factory*.

⁵⁵ The Colegio Americano in Bogota had separate girls and boys schools until the secondary program was combined in 1949. In 1953, the ministry cancelled the school’s authorization to teach mixed sex classes and forced the new school to remodel a very new facility. Olga Lucia Zuluaga et al., *Historia de la Educación en Bogotá, Tomo I* (Bogotá: Panamericana Formas e Impresos, 2002), p. 252.

⁵⁶ “La Religión en Estados Unidos de Norte America,” *El Catolicismo* (Bogotá), 24 Aug. 1945.

language programs, and the library liberally lent academic and mass media resources to local Catholic schools. Given the center's history of collaboration with the Church, it was shocking to its board when the center appeared on the 1951 enemies list. Along with the Parrish School in Barranquilla, it was the only other institution of US cultural diplomacy to make the list. Placed in historical perspective, however, it is clear that strong Catholic resistance to US cultural influence was much more muted than it had been just a decade before, and the list reflected the sentiments of only a small faction within the Church.

The Colombo-Americano that opened in Barranquilla in 1956 followed Bogotá's lead in not explicitly engaging religious discourse. On the coast, lectures by academic Catholic clerics were less common, but this was a function of the relative absence of Catholic universities and colegios in the region. They had fewer local Catholic academics to engage with. Indeed, the few lectures given by members of the clergy were usually presentations by priests from outside the region who were traveling a State Department lecture circuit. Collaborative anticommunist efforts between the church and the US government were often behind such lectures: a Colombian priest from Bogotá detailed how a new Alliance for Progress housing project had impacted his impoverished parishioners; the former rector of a Jesuit university in Chile spoke on combating communism through higher education.⁵⁷ In the area of English teaching, the center supported the efforts of Catholic schools and especially the newly arriving religious orders from the US. Local woman who joined the English-speaking Marymount order, for example, were allowed to enroll in the center's language classes free of charge. The

⁵⁷ Actas (23Aug. 1957, 6 June 1966), Actas/Bq, CCA/Barranquilla MSS.

board also commonly extended scholarships to students at the city's Catholic secondary schools upon direct requests of mother superiors.⁵⁸

Not surprisingly, the Colombo-Americano in Medellín had more intimate connections to church authority. Catholicism was deeply embedded in the cultural and educational systems of Medellín and Antioquia, and the center's collaboration with the Church reflected this complex reality. Within that center, the Church had greater ability to filter Colombian-US educational encounters. The Archbishop of the city was an honorary member of the center, and thus he or his official designee was commonly involved in the cultural pageantry of the institute. At the opening of the semester in 1949, for example, a crowd of 250 students heard the pastor of the city's cathedral lecture on "Why We Should Learn English"; the center provided mimeographed copies of the speech so students could follow the language more closely. But the Church role was more than ceremonial, and it had a more official voice in center activities. The center's scholarship committee included the Archbishop's designate, who was in a position to judge the moral character of candidates for US educational programs. Following the Bogotá model, this committee screened candidates for a variety of US university and technical training scholarships and also made recommendations for university acceptance. At times, two priests served on the small committee and could make their presence felt in the overall operation of the center.⁵⁹ In one incident a priest committeemen charged a US teacher at the center with making anti-Catholic statements in class and pressed for his removal. Though an investigation by the board found no

⁵⁸ Actas (23Aug. 1957, 12 April 1966), Actas/Bq, CCA/Barranquilla MSS.

⁵⁹ Actas (10 Jan. 1947, 16 April 1947), Actas1/Med, CCA/Medellín MSS; Minutes of Local Selection Committee Meeting (11 May 1949), Actas1/Med, CCA/Medellín MSS; Monthly Statement on Cultural Institutes: Centro Colombo-Americano de Medellín, February 1949, Actas1/Med, CCA/Medellín MSS.

evidence to support the charge, they terminated his employment because of the way he conducted himself toward the Church during the investigation process.⁶⁰ Still, the power of Church to filter the staff was not absolute. Here, as in the other Colombo-Americanos, well-respected staffers regularly included wives of those US Protestants who ministered to local foreigners (and, thus, were not perceived as a proselytizing threat).⁶¹

Additionally, loans of film and teaching equipment to schools and other cultural centers in the region did not exclude Protestant schools.⁶²

Administering barrio film programs gave each of the Centros Colombo-Americanos an additional role in negotiating transnational Catholicism. Films these centers screened in neighborhoods or offered to educational institutions in the 1960s continued to assert the Catholic cultural credentials of the US. Features treated secular efforts at preserving California's historic Franciscan missions (*Rosary of the Missions*), US Catholic priest-pilots flying into remote New Mexican villages to say mass on Sundays (*News Magazine no. 56*), and a celebration of Easter with a Catholic mass at the outdoor amphitheater of Arlington National Cemetery (*Easter in the U.S.A.*).⁶³ Logically, the US Southwest figured prominently in USIA films with Catholic content, and continuing the tradition established in OIAA film, the agency also emphasized Hispanic and Indian contributions to US culture. Such films served the purpose of blurring the limiting dichotomies that historically framed Latin American-US encounters: Latin vs. Anglo, modern vs. traditional, and Catholic vs. Protestant. *And Now Miguel* told the story

⁶⁰ Monthly Statement on Cultural Institutes: Centro Colombo-Americano de Medellín, June 1949, Actas1/Med, CCA/Medellín MSS.

⁶¹ Quarterly Statement - Centro Colombo-Americano de Medellín, April-June 1953, Actas1/Med, CCA/Medellín MSS; Quarterly Statement - Centro Colombo-Americano de Medellín, July-Sept 1953, Actas1/Med, CCA/Medellín MSS.

⁶² Quarterly Statement - Centro Colombo-Americano de Medellín, April-June 1952, Actas1/Med, CCA/Medellín MSS.

⁶³ *USIS Catálogo de Películas*, pp. 63, 66, 217.

of a Catholic New Mexican sheep ranching family who valued modern education alongside its ranching traditions.⁶⁴ Navajo rug weaving was the subject of *Indian Life in New Mexico* but it made references to Native American Catholicism.⁶⁵ An especially dominant focus in cinematic projections of the Hispanic US was Puerto Rico. The island commonwealth was presented as a Latin American and Catholic society that was transforming into a model of modernity. *Beyond the Valley* emphasized the Catholic island's rapid transition from "agricultural country with a limited number of crops to an expanding industrialized country."⁶⁶ Such documentaries implicitly challenged narrow framing of US culture as Anglo-Protestant.

Importantly, as Church hegemony over national education declined around mid-century, Colombo-Americano educational programs were prominent among the new educational options for women. From the start, there was approximate gender parity among the student bodies of each Colombo-Americano, but usually the number of women quickly grew to far exceed the number of men enrolled in courses. Such a high enrollment of adult and young-adult women in coeducational programs was a novelty on the Colombian educational landscape. Observing the mixing of students in classrooms, cultural spaces, social programs, and common areas of the Bogotá center during its first two years, *El Tiempo* declared that the Colombo-Americano had "knocked down the barriers" between the sexes.⁶⁷ Across mid-century, the tremendous response of women to programs at each cultural center is well documented in their archives. Women enrolled at the BNCs for English language classes but also for the various commercial courses that

⁶⁴ *And Now Miguel* (1953), NARG 306.15; *USIS Catálogo de Películas*, p. 19

⁶⁵ *Indian Life in New Mexico* NARG 306.87; *USIS Catálogo de Películas*, p. 64.

⁶⁶ *Beyond the Valley* (1959), NARG 306.5590; *USIS Catálogo de Películas*, p. 116.

⁶⁷ "El centro, en primer lugar, ha roto la valla que existía entre los sexos masculino y femenino." Andrés Samper G, "Latinoamérica y Norteamérica: El Centro Colombo Americano," *ET*, 23 Aug. 1944.

were offered. Especially since the 1930s, private commercial education programs had grown increasingly popular among women of the middle classes. Though Liberals had championed the principle of equal educational access for women, they like Conservatives and the Church before them did not build the schools to meet demand. Secondary programs for women were few in number; only about 1,400 Colombian women were enrolled in such programs in the early 1940s and by the end of that decade the figure was only 3,500.⁶⁸ There was a clear growth trend, but the increases came very slowly in the nation of eleven million people. As a result, commercial/business schools and English language course became popular, modern alternatives for younger, urban females of the middle classes.

Whether with a bachillerato program completed or just a couple years of a secondary school behind them, career and employment minded women were drawn to Colombo-Americano classrooms. Courses in business administration and bookkeeping were popular when they were periodically offered, but by the 1960s bilingual secretary programs were a regular part of programming. On the coast, these programs were crucial to the financial viability of the centers. Generally a two year cycle of semesters, these programs developed students' English language and secretarial skills. For successful graduates, salaries were considered quite good, even high (for women) and this sparked demand for the program. In Medellín, for example, other private and commercial institutions offered similar secretarial training programs, but the center's strong connections to the local business community gave it a competitive edge. The center marketed this advantage explaining to prospective applicants that businesses across the city regularly hired its students. To emphasize the point, the course prospectus identified

⁶⁸ Helg, *La Educación en Colombia*, pp. 268-269.

the most prominent local companies that employed its graduates. It argued that a diploma from the Colombo-Americano secretarial program was “proof that [students] had the qualifications required” for a professional position.⁶⁹ Through that decade, the center graduated several hundred women in the program and placed many of them in local offices of national and foreign companies.⁷⁰ In Cartagena, the bilingual secretary program was popular from the start and initially attracted many of the female students from the local American school.⁷¹ At Barranquilla, the program faced especially high demand and had to turn away 150 applicants in its first year. By the mid-1960s, a new building allowed the board to expand the program and it enrolled more than 200 women. A pre-secretarial program was even added to meet demand from younger students.⁷²

Most women who enrolled at Centros Colombo-Americanos were not in the popular secretarial program but in the English language courses. In those classes and in the various public spaces of centers, the sexes mingled more freely than they could in other Colombian educational institutions. And owing to the high enrollment of women, programming in each city engaged in a national discourse over changing gender systems. Suffrage was not extended to Colombian women until the mid-1950s, and before that it was a developing political issue. Thus did the public speaking clubs formed among students at the centers debate that and other popular gender questions of day: Should women be immediately granted the right to vote? Is a single person happier than a

⁶⁹ “Así, el tener un diploma otorgado por el Centro Colombo-Americano es prueba de que se tienen las calificaciones pedidas por las personas interesadas en recibir un buen trabajo profesional.” Prospectus - “Curso de Secretariado Bilingüe: Centro Colombo- Americano Medellín,” 1966, Centro Documental/Library CCA/Med, F:Biblioteca - Diversas Publicaciones Emandadas de la Biblioteca, en *Distintas Épocas*.

⁷⁰ Acta (11 Feb. 1969), Actas2/Med, CCA/Medellín MSS.

⁷¹ Ramon del Castillo, “Memorias,” *Anuario 2002*; Lourdes de Zubiria, “Memorias,” *Anuario 2002*; “Nuestro Mundo: Notas del Centro Colombo Americano,” *El Diario de la Costa* (Cartagena), 24 July 1976.

⁷² Actas (5 Dec. 1962, 13 Oct. 64, 14 Sep. 1965, 18 Mar. 1966), Actas/Bq, CCA/Barranquilla MSS.

married one? And which is the stronger sex?⁷³ At the same time, the centers celebrated prominent Colombian and US women as lecturers, artists, and musicians, and their scholarship and college advising services were as equally accessible to women as men. Through their educational and cultural programs, the centers maneuvered in and bridged Colombia's educational gender gap --in part a legacy of Church control over education.

Conclusion

As Colombians were challenging Church and traditional elite hegemony over national culture from the 1930s forward, US models of modernity were gaining currency. Colombian familiarity with US culture had been rising via commercial entertainment since the decade before, but such familiarity was skewed by the exaggerated style of Hollywood films and the negative stereotypes it fed. Beginning in the 1940s, Washington's emerging cultural diplomacy presented Colombians with more diverse representations of US culture and lifestyle in the interest of building cultural common ground. The new diplomacy proffered educational and cultural resources that individuals and institutions across-class could access and employ as they negotiated their own paths toward modernity. For segments of the elite, emerging middle and new professional classes, the US rapidly became an alternative model to the European Catholic educational system of the nation.

Though the cultural authority of the Catholic Church was waning, it remained a powerful force in Colombia. From the beginning, the OIAA had to mount a strong effort to overcome historical tensions that narrowly framed US culture as Anglo-Protestant and Colombian culture as Latin-Catholic. Establishing US Catholic credentials became a

⁷³ Quarterly Statements - Centro Colombo-Americano de Medellín (April-June 1951, July-Sept 1951, April-June 1952), Actas1/Med, CCA/Medellín MSS.

priority of the OIAA, the State Department, and later the USIA. In the 1940s, converging concerns over Protestantism and communism opened new collaborative spaces where the cultural and political agendas of both nations and both national Catholic churches found common ground. Gradually, the Colombian Catholic Church began to use US educational resources in attempts to maintain its cultural authority over students. Promoting English language instruction, establishing US-style educational institutions, and linking Colombians to Catholic schools in the US, the Colombian Church used US cultural resources to target Protestantism, reassert its influence over national education, and make Colombians' foreign educational experiences more Catholic. Both the US Catholic church and the US government enthusiastically collaborated in these processes in a quest for Pan American unity against fascism and then communism. As the US exerted leadership against international communism in the early Cold War, the Catholic Church sanctioned a strengthening political relationship between Bogotá and Washington. Though some Catholic nationalists inside and outside the clergy continued to be vocal critics of US cultural influence in the nation, it is clear that Colombia's mid-century cultural shift away from Europe and toward the US was fostered in part by leaders and educators within the same church.

Conclusion

Modern Alternatives

Under the influence of revisionist scholarship during the second half of twentieth century, explanations about the growth of US cultural influence in Latin America commonly rested upon economic analyses and assertions of dependency. That US imperialism, both classical (territorial) and neo-imperial (economic), produced cultural dominance over the region was widely proclaimed and uncritically accepted. Commercial mass media was a common target for critics because it promoted North American lifestyle based upon capitalist consumption. In scholarship and in political discourse (emanating from the left), US-produced advertising, film, radio, print publications, photography and television were ascribed the power to colonize thought and charged with destroying local cultures. A second popular target for revisionist critique was the growing movement of Latin Americans into US higher education. Latin Americans with education credentials granted in the US --most notably, high profile politicians, government ministers, and business leaders-- were suspect of cultural betrayal and their loyalties to the *patria* [fatherland] were openly and loudly questioned.

Over the course of the mid-century decades (1930s-1960s), the presence of US commercial mass media in Latin America certainly increased dramatically, and the influence of US higher education in the region was clearly on the rise. This dissertation evidences both of these trends. Yet as an examination of the Colombian case also demonstrates, the US mass media presence in Latin America was not restricted to the commercial sphere. Nor was Latin American engagement with US education models and

resources confined to the university level. Though diversity and depth characterized inter-American cultural relations around mid-century, historiography did not reveal it.

From the 1930s forward, collaborative educational and cultural programming between US and Latin American governments, institutions, organizations, communities and individuals was robust. Over the course of the four decades that framed mid-century, US cultural influence increased dramatically as traditional European cultural influence declined. Encouraged by US cultural diplomacy, Latin American government policies, and local reception of US resources, new venues of inter-American cultural contact emerged to play a crucial role in expanding Latin American-US relations beyond traditional economic, political and military boundaries. The institutions and media programs considered in this study were not the only venues to appear, but they were central to introducing and sustaining new US educational and cultural influences in the region. Importantly, they fostered new familiarity with US culture not only among the elite but among the emerging middle classes, professional groups and the lower classes as well. Yet, American schools, binational cultural centers and US-government film, radio, and print media programs were infrequently recognized in historical scholarship because researchers seldom examined Latin American-US encounters in local context.

Analyzing the content of commercial mass media from the sites of production in the US, scholarship made sweeping and unsubstantiated assertions about the power of such content in the far-off fields of reception. It casually assumed rather than articulated US cultural dominance via modern technologies of mass communication. Failing to historicize the US mass media presence in the region, it never considered the mass media programming of the OIAA nor the extensive transnational collaboration it engendered. It

left unexplored the broad use of transnational media resources in modernization campaigns, education reform, and other political, economic and religious projects that were initiated from within the region. As a result, it never acknowledged the ability of locals to filter the original intent of foreign mass media products. In such literature, mass media content was defined as powerful propaganda that ensured US economic dominance and secured US cultural imperialism.

Regarding the increased movement of Latin Americans into US universities, historical context was equally ignored. Scholarship never articulated the in-country routes that Latin Americans took to US higher education; collaborative projects between Latin American and US educational, professional and cultural organizations, libraries, and schools were occasionally noted, but they were infrequently explored. Largely overlooked was the availability of US-style education in the American schools and US-sponsored cultural centers that had emerged on urban landscapes across the region. As a result, scholarship offered limited insight into the popularization of US educational models as alternatives to traditional elite, Catholic and European-style education. Important questions about why educational and cultural paths were leading so many Latin Americans to US universities, colleges, technical training, and professionalization courses were left unanswered in analyses focused narrowly on cataloging abuses by imperialists (or neo-imperialist) and identifying their local, US-educated surrogates.

As Marxist influence declined, however, subordination of cultural development to economic processes gave way to new approaches that defined culture as decidedly more complex. Peeling back historiographical layers, new scholarship repositioned culture beside, and not behind economics and politics. In this process, the sub-field of cultural

history began to emerge. Among scholars interested in cultural processes within empire, Gramsci's theory of hegemony proved especially popular because it provided a useful framework for analyzing cultural dominance. Coercion alone, Gramsci posited, was never enough to secure the dominance of one group or ideology over another. Instead, individuals had to consent to their own domination by embracing aspects of the dominant culture; only with such consent could the culture of the dominant group become normative. The theory lent much needed nuance to analyses of cultural encounters and kept questions and concerns over cultural imperialism and dominance relevant, even as Marxist-influenced paradigms lost currency. Importantly, new attention to hegemony also helped to shift researchers away from the imperial centers of power (and their metropolitan archives) and toward local sites where cultural contact actually took place.

In the last two decades, the influences of post-colonial scholarship and cultural history in general have taken the study of US foreign (and especially Latin American-US) relations in new directions. State-centered analyses of economics and diplomatic strategy defined this historiography for most of the last century, but now cultural questions are often at the center of analysis. This study responds to an important development within the new historiography of Latin American-US relations: recognition of transnational connections, networks, and communities that develop across national borders and loosen the influence of nation-states over individuals' life paths and identities. Inspired by calls to explore transnationalism, the study considers cross-border cultural processes that structured Colombian-US relations during the mid-twentieth century. Analyzing the growth of US cultural influence in urban centers in the Andes and on the Caribbean, the study articulates a mid-century shift in Colombian cultural orientation away from Europe

and toward the US. Asking why this shift began and how it sustained, the study evidences high degrees of transnational collaboration between governments, churches, educational and cultural institutions, and individuals in both nations. Through such collaboration schools and classrooms, cultural centers and performance stages, galleries, radio programs and outdoor theaters developed as crucial infrastructure that facilitated the spread of US cultural influences.

Articulating transnational cultural collaboration in Colombian-US relations, this study deemphasizes two oppositional dichotomies that have been central to theories of cultural dominance and analyses of empire. The first is the foreign/local dichotomy. Because revisionist scholarship relied too heavily on sources far removed from sites of cultural contact, much of it rigidly distinguished between the foreign and local forces that converged in contact zones. Employing static views of culture that labeled foreign influences contaminants of local authenticity, it drew sharp distinctions between things foreign and local while glossing over many of the complex identities and impulses that frame cultural encounters. Individuals, groups, ideas, and activities that defied simple categorization as either foreign or local were often left out analysis. Framing foreign and local as oppositional, as mutually exclusive and as jointly exhaustive of the range of local realities, analysis marginalized complex regional, national, and transnational influences that construct culture. In contrast, and following the lead of contemporary scholarship, this study probes the blurred lines between foreign and local. Attending to the fluidity of each category, it demonstrates how common cultural interests and shared cultural experiences have been as crucial to the construction of inter-American cultural relations as cultural differences, conflict and clash.

The second oppositional dichotomy reconsidered in this dissertation is that of coercion/consent. This particular dichotomy remains central to theories of hegemony, but it has serious limitations for examining transnational cultures. Hegemony reduces all foreign/local encounters to power relationships. Approaching US-sponsored education and cultural projects in Latin America through such a narrow lens restricts our ability to see how common interests, intersecting needs, and shared visions of modernity structured inter-American cultural encounters at mid-century. Asymmetrical power relationships were certainly evident around Colombian-US cultural encounters. Indeed, multiple hegemonic projects converged where schools, cultural centers and mass media programs developed: Liberal plans for national unity and their designs for modernity, Catholic Church attempts to retain cultural authority, and US government promotion of Pan Americanism, anti-Communism, and international capitalism. But power relationships did not exclusively condition educational and cultural processes that unfolded; to privilege such relationships from the outset, marginalizes the individuals, families, institutions and communities that enthusiastically and aggressively fashioned US cultural resources around their own intent. To base analysis of cultural encounters upon equations of coercion and consent is to determine in advance that some form of cultural domination took place.

Clearly, scholars of Latin American-US relations should continue to probe questions of cultural dominance and to identify the variant forms of US imperialism that have impacted the region. During the twentieth century, the US had territorial possessions in Latin America, and it exercised degrees of economic hegemony over other parts of the hemisphere. Additionally, its political concerns in war and cold war set an inter-

American political agenda to which most nations had to respond. Throughout the period, extreme asymmetries of power certainly conditioned Washington's relations with governments, militaries, industries, institutions, and national citizenries. Yet, when we move out of metropolitan archives and examine cultural encounters in contact zones, it becomes clear that few encounters are reducible to those power relationships that exist around them. In those zones, what is foreign is not always distinct and distinguishable from what is local. Ideas, resources, organizations and individuals frequently defy both categories. Further, if we approach the Colombian-US educational and cultural projects examined in this study through the lens of power relationships, we limit our ability to see how transnational collaboration evolved through common interests, intersecting needs, and shared philosophies rather than through coerced or consensual submission to foreign authority.

As evidenced in the chapters above, US educational and cultural models held tremendous appeal in mid-century Latin America. Throughout the region, individuals, families, institutions, and governments willingly engaged US resources as alternative approaches to modernity. Thus, recognizing this appeal is crucial toward an understanding of Latin American-US cultural relations from the 1930s forward. To the extent that frames of imperialism and dominance overlook this appeal or to the extent that it is dismissed as the coercive success of a neo-imperial power, many of the complexities of inter-American cultural relations will be left unexplored. Scholarship on Latin American-US relations will remain --as it was during much of the twentieth century-- blinded by empire.

Colombian Cultural Change

Colombia's mid-century shift in cultural orientation away from Europe and toward the US is best understood in a local context. During the 1930s and 1940s, the nation experienced a period of accelerated cultural change in urban centers across the Andes and on the Caribbean. At the center of these processes of change were the expansion and reform of the national education system. At that time, new political leadership recognized elite exclusive secondary education and an inadequate primary school system as obstacles to modernity and set out to reform them. Returning to national power after a fifty year absence, Liberals articulated new social functions for education that supported their modernist visions. In a departure from tradition, their programs attempted to extend literacy to millions of impoverished Colombians whose educational needs had been historically ignored. Connecting the rural majority and the rising urban populations more closely to the central state and the national economy was a primary objective. School expansion and curriculum diversification projects also served to enlist the small but growing middle and professional classes in the state modernization project. Significantly, as these new programs were implemented, the long-standing elite monopoly over Colombian education resources was slowly dismantled.

This new education agenda was a key component of a broader Liberal project of cultural reform. Intent on developing greater national consciousness among diverse regions, the overall program aimed to construct a more inclusive and more politically useful frame of Colombian culture. Until then, the dominant frame of Colombianidad projected elite interests and was built around narrow representations of upper-class Andean lifestyle. Supported by an exclusionary secondary education system with strong

transnational ties to Europe, it reflected affinities for languages, literature, music, art, and fashion of the Old Continent. Not surprisingly, this cultural frame was far removed from the lived realities of most Colombians and its usefulness as an agent of national unity was severely limited. Broadening the official government definition of national culture, Liberal programs shifted attention away from European cultural models and began to emphasize “authentic” Colombian customs, traditions and practices. As never before, select indigenous symbols, art and mythology, rural Andean music and dance, and the literature of national authors were in vogue and officially promoted.

New Liberal enthusiasm for authentic representations of Colombianidad developed as war was overtaking Europe. Before the first battles of World War II occurred, the Spanish Civil War placed two governmental approaches to modernity in sharp relief for Latin American observers: tradition-laden Catholic authoritarianism and secular Popular-Front Republicanism. In Colombia (as throughout the region), the primary cultural question of that Spanish war, the meaning of Hispanidad in a modern world, infused discourse over national identity and modernity. As Colombians debated their cultural and political ties to Spain, the Second World War broke out and fueled an even broader reconsideration of Colombian cultural ties to the Old Continent. For those interested in distancing Colombian culture from European tradition, warfare provided ample avenues for drawing sharp distinctions. At the same time, the building continental conflict disrupted transatlantic cultural migrations that historically reinforced European influences among Colombian elite: ocean travel became difficult, universities temporarily closed, and the flow of European cultural products and consumer goods was much reduced.

To project more inclusive representations of the nation and facilitate broader diffusion of national rather than European culture, the government funded performance groups and tours, mobile theaters and libraries, and radio and film programming. It also used the growing number of classrooms across the nation as laboratories for reconstructing Colombian nationalism. New curriculum emphasized the teaching of Colombian geography, history, and literature by educators who were citizens of the nation (and not French religious or other European foreigners). Schools also introduced national symbols and customs to the young. Certainly, the new cultural programming reflected the biases of government cultural managers, who dismissed non-Andean cultural practices, who glorified indigenous cultures of the past but devalued the Indian of the present, and who demonstrated greater comfort and enthusiasm for working with urban rather than rural populations. Indeed around mid-century, Liberal plans for the “democratization” of Colombian culture had well-defined limits. Still, Liberal reforms significantly contributed to important cultural shifts of the era. No longer would elite lifestyle, customs and traditions exclusively define what it meant to be Colombian. And no longer would European high culture set the standard for Colombianidad.

Also at the center of contemporary cultural change was the diminishing influence of the Catholic Church over the nation’s classrooms. Asserting government control over education in the 1930s, Liberals had reignited century-old secularization debates and launched an aggressive assault on Church privilege and power. Identifying the Church as an impediment to progress, they successfully stripped it of its constitutional role in educational oversight. Thus as mid-century approached, Colombian education was no longer organized and directed in accordance with Catholicism. Officially-sanctioned

pedagogy and curriculum were refashioned to conform to Liberal visions of modernity rather than Catholic tradition and doctrine. The Church hierarchy did not take the Liberal reforms lying down, and with or without constitutional authority it remained a powerful force in national education. Especially at the secondary level, the nation remained dependent on Church personnel and resources. Yet authority had clearly shifted, and as the system expanded across mid-century, the central state and not the Church drafted the blueprints for educational modernity.

While cultural change was fueled by Liberal reforms and the diminishing authority of the Church, it was also accelerated by rapid urbanization and the proliferation of mass media communication. Through the mid-century decades, as the rural republic became what Safford and Palacios call a “nation of cities,” millions of middle and lower-class Colombians radically transformed their lives; abandoning agricultural communities for new urban landscapes, individuals and families negotiated new challenges as they cleared their own paths to modernity. Importantly, many of the new urbanites recognized education as fundamental to their goals and began to demand greater educational resources and services from their government. Ideologically, Liberals were committed to meeting the rising demand, but in practice building the necessary educational infrastructure would take decades to accomplish. Thus, where both state and Church educational options were lacking, Colombians began to turn to new schooling and training programs emerging in the commercial and private sectors.

Simultaneously, new mass media resources and channels were further contributing to Colombian cultural change. Film, radio, and print publications offered Colombians across class new platforms for challenging the traditional elite construction

of national culture, the more inclusive frame of that culture proffered by Liberals, as well as the overall cultural authority of the Church and elite. As radio stations appeared and multiplied, cinema audiences grew, and print publications diversified, new cultural models circulated in the nation. In concert with slowly rising literacy rates and higher education levels, the broad diffusion of alternative cultural models via mass media limited the ability of the elite and the Church to successfully filter, frame and project a dominant version of Colombianidad. With written culture no longer the exclusive domain of the elite, urban growth redefining Colombian lifestyles, and access to diverse media resources expanding among the middle and popular classes, neither Church nor government were in a position to control the contemporary processes of cultural change. Under such dynamic conditions, Colombians across-class developed greater familiarity not only with regional cultures within their nation but with foreign cultures within their hemisphere. Greater interest in, familiarity with, and access to US educational and cultural models developed within this context.

The US Educational and Cultural Alternative

Through the campaign for Pan American unity that began in the 1930s, Washington's new cultural diplomacy established direct communication channels to the Latin American public. Competitively joining European nations in presenting cultural programming in the region, the US made substantial effort to introduce and reintroduce itself to its hemispheric neighbors. Programs intensified as war then cold war came to dominate mid-century geo-politics, and mass media became a crucial tool of modern US diplomacy. Responding first to European and Axis influence in the region and later to fear of Soviet and Cuban Communism, an influx of film, radio, and print resources

presented US cultural, political and economic models to millions. Produced with the intent to persuade, the mass media products were propaganda. They focused implicitly (and often explicitly) on the principle concerns of US foreign policy at mid-century: building Pan American unity, challenging fascism and communism, and promoting democratic capitalism. In Colombia, however, the government, the national Catholic Church, and the powerful coffee and industrial lobby shared Washington's foreign policy concerns. As a result, the persuasive potential of US mass media content, as foreign propaganda, was muted. At mid-century, hemispheric unity, anti-radicalism, and capitalist development were Colombian as much as US political objectives.

Throughout mid-century, demand for US mass media programs and resources was always high among the Colombian public. Audiences for non-commercial OIAA films topped five million annually by the end of the Second World War. After significantly decreasing in the post-war decade, the USIA reinvigorated the film program. By the early 1960s, audience figures rose again to that wartime level and remained so throughout that decade. Educators, factory owners, military commanders, local politicians, government cultural managers and parish priests were among the many that projected US government films for their educational, cultural, entertainment and/or propaganda value. National, university, and local radio stations did the same with US-produced programs that included news and commentary, contemporary music, and English language courses. Owing to high demand, stock of US-produced print materials including magazines, pamphlets, and posters was difficult to maintain, and the Colombian response to library collections, especially academic textbooks, periodical holdings and musical recordings, was tremendous throughout these decades.

Mid-century mass media programs of the OIAA and USIA introduced diverse aspects of US culture to a wide cross-section of the Colombian public and strongly contributed to the spread of US cultural influence in the nation. Through film, radio, and print publications, many Colombians were exposed to US history, geography, culture and lifestyle for the first time. That most of the mass media content met the definition of propaganda is clear, but based on the ways locals used the media resources, it is also clear that such a definition is too limiting. Once in the hands of Colombians, US mass media resources were subject to multiple layers of local intent that altered original meaning and purpose. Closer to the fields of reception and far from the distant sites of production, Colombian filters qualified messages and reframed content to conform to local, regional and national agendas. Significantly, that Washington's mass media programs had strong cultural, and especially educational, content explains much of their local appeal. In a nation struggling to expand educational infrastructure and adapt new models of modernity, such resources were enthusiastically received across region and class.

As the new Pan Americanism had evolved during the 1930s, US diplomats quickly recognized strong Latin American interest in US educational models and resources. When a formal program of cultural diplomacy was initiated at the end of that decade, education became the early dominant theme of the film, radio, and print resources gathered for circulation in the region. That education was granted such a central role in contemporary US diplomacy should not be surprising. Though often overlooked in historical analyses that treat the era, education was then a dynamic force reshaping US culture, economics, and politics. In just three decades, the High School Movement had increased enrollments in US secondary schools dramatically; whereas a small minority

attended high school just prior to World War I, almost three-quarters of the age-appropriate US population were enrolled before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Graduations rate reached above 50% before FDR sent troops off to war, and that achievement –as much as skyscrapers, automobiles, telephones or lifestyles of consumption-- defined US modernity at mid-century.

The US success in harnessing education to modernize society did not go unnoticed abroad. Given the opportunity in the 1930s and 1940s, Latin Americans were quick to experiment with the educational resources Washington offered. In Colombia, as elsewhere, European Catholic education models had not worked for vast majority of the population. As government and community leaders searched for new models to reform and modernize the national education systems, individuals and families looked for solutions to meet more personal needs. As presented in OIAA film, radio and print programs (but also observable in practice), the US educational system was not monopolized by a narrow elite class. Nor were it resources confined to formal and traditional educational institutions. The US approach to education was a work in progress, and equitable distribution of resources among regions, economic classes, and race/ethnic and gender groups had not been achieved. Yet, more than other models in circulation, US education demonstrated success in reaching the middle and working classes --groups that had been historically blocked out of Latin American classrooms. Technical and pragmatic, US models defined education broadly and privilege flexibility and responsiveness to community needs.

While mass media programs were projected to broad audiences, American schools and Colombo-Americano cultural centers provided more intimate and more long-

term venues for inter-American cultural encounters. As these institutions appeared in urban centers in the Andes and on the Caribbean, they caught the attention of individuals and families from the middle, professional and upper classes who viewed US culture favorably and associated it with modernity. Locally controlled and embracing a philosophy of cultural reciprocity, they evolved as a reflection of their urban Colombian communities. Starting as small schools which catered to US and other English-speaking foreigners, the first American schools in Barranquilla and Bogotá immediately attracted elite Colombian families. As sister schools opened in urban centers across the country, the trend continued. While these schools were strongly associated with US culture, they functioned within elite Colombian realities and, as a result, grew around locally-determined needs. For the tens of thousands of Colombians who graduated from these schools in the second half of the twentieth century, the American schools of Colombia were local institutions that provided an alternative to traditional Colombian education. They offered Spanish-English bilingualism, secular coeducation, binational accreditations, rigorous and modern curricula that emphasized technical learning and science, and easy access to university programs at home or abroad. Comparatively, the various Colombo-Americano cultural centers also evolved to meet local needs. They, too, provided alternative educational and cultural options at a time when Colombia's national educational system was expanding and diversifying but unable to satisfy middle-class demand. For the more than 100,000 Colombians who enrolled in language and business courses at one of eight Colombo-Americano cultural centers since the early 1940s and for the many more who participated in the centers' cultural programs over those decades, these locally-directed institutions provided flexible educational and cultural options at

reasonable costs. Some academic classes and many cultural events were free of charge. The emerging middle class was the primary beneficiary of programming, but so too were the new professional classes. The Colombo-Americanos each established a variety of programs designed around the career interests, training needs and work schedules of the populations they served. Women especially enjoyed greater access to classrooms at the Colombo-Americanos than they would have in within the national education system. And those who wanted access to the centers' cultural stages –Colombian artists, writers, musicians, intellectuals, academics, government officials, or members of the clergy-- found these centers to be enthusiastic about cultural diffusion and committed to Colombian-US cultural reciprocity.

Around the American schools and Centros Culturales Colombo-Americanos, transnational educational and cultural communities emerged as Colombians responded enthusiastically to collaborative cultural projects with the US --its people, governments, educational institutions, and cultural organizations. Through these developing communities and the diverse relationships they fostered, segments of the national elite and the growing middle and professional classes had direct and sustained contact with US culture, resources and models. As a result, some developed new affinities for US language, history, culture and lifestyle. They built relationships with individuals and institutions in the US, and they participated in cross-border dialogues, exchanges, and cultural projects. For many individuals and families, the US offered attractive alternatives to the traditional elite models of culture that had long structured their world and limited their educational paths. Participants in these new communities opted for new approaches to education and cultural diffusion that they perceived to be more modern and flexible

and appreciated as secular. In sharp contrast to the generations that preceded it, this new Colombian generation prioritized transnational relationships not across the Atlantic but within the hemisphere. Shifting traditional Colombian cultural orientation away from Europe and toward the US, they expanded their educational and cultural options at home and abroad. In the process, they reconstructed inter-American relations.

In the aggregate, American schools, Colombo-American cultural centers, and mass media diplomacy facilitated greater Colombian familiarity with US culture at mid-century. Clearly, these institutions and programs met US diplomatic objectives. Successfully challenging stereotypes of the US as culturally inferior to Europe or void of culture, the schools, cultural centers and media programs examined in this study cultivated new respect for the US as a legitimate cultural producer and, especially, an international education provider. These institutions and programs offered Colombians new opportunities to formally engage with US education and cultural resources, and across class and region they proved very receptive to the offer. Exploring schools, cultural centers and media programming in local contexts, this dissertation evidences extensive educational and cultural collaboration among governments in Colombia and the US as well as the Catholic Churches in both nations. Equally evident are increasing communications, exchanges of personnel, and sharing of resources among Colombian and US cultural institutions, schools, colleges, professional groups and organizations. The new transnational educational and cultural communities that emerged as a result of such collaboration manifest Colombia's mid-century cultural shift away from Europe and toward the US. While US cultural diplomacy should be credited with encouraging this

shift, this dissertation demonstrates that Colombian enthusiasm and energy sustained the trend across the mid-century decades.

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