

PERÓN'S POLITICAL RADIO MELODRAMA: PERONISM AND RADIO CULTURE
1920-1955

A Thesis
by
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Abstract

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Juan Domingo Perón casts a long shadow on the history of Argentine politics from the 1940s to today. What made Perón so successful was his use of identity politics, specifically focusing on the lower, working class groups as a kind of political base. The radio played a unique role in Perón's presidency, due to the leader's reliance on cultural symbols audience members knew, entertainers who were household names, and rhetoric that was a part of a larger Argentine national identity. The tango and the folklore movements were intertwined and demonstrated cultural divisions within Argentine culture. Perón was able to utilize the populist language that was on the radio to enable his rise to power. After winning the presidential election in 1946, Perón incorporated radio stations to consolidate his political power. By the early 1950s, Perón's propaganda machine effectively used radio to the maximum extent to gain political power. Beginning in 1953, a series of radio missteps meant that Perón's power started to diminish as oppositional groups gained access to the radio.

Radio then became a tool for the destabilization of Perón's government and led directly to his exile from Argentina in 1955.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to the two most important women in my life, April Byrge and Mary Ann Widener. April, without your love and support I could never be where I am today. This work has taken us to the other side of the world, and I am so happy to have shared it with you. To many more adventures.

To Mary Ann Widener, thank you for all the support and time that you have given this project. Without your skills and abilities, this work would not have the best part: maps. The maps that you created are amazing and help convey points that words cannot. Thank you for your support and hard work and love.

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INTRODUCTION

*Yes, of course it is 'melodrama!'
Everything in the life of the lowly poor is
melodrama. The pain of the poor is not the pain
of the theater, but rather the pain of life and
very bitter. For this reason it is melodrama, a
snobby melodrama, cheap and ridiculous for
mediocre and egotistical men. Because the poor
do not invent pain, they endure it!--Eva Perón¹*

Radio was a political tool before World War II. In the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt started the weekly radio address to present his political agenda to the U.S. public. In Mexico, Lázaro Cárdenas used the radio to present political propaganda to help win political support for nationalizing the oil fields. In Italy, Mussolini pioneered the radio as a medium of propaganda to draw in citizens to his fascist political ideology. During WWII, the radio was central in informing the public about the events of Pearl Harbor. A study on how the Peronist government use of the radio as a political strategy sheds light on how populism gained political support in Argentina. Latin America in the middle of the twentieth century was a hotbed of populist activity, and many of these populist governments looked to Perón as a guiding example. The central question that this study will follow is: how did Perón use the radio as a political tool?

Perón's success lies in how he used popular culture for images and political rhetoric. Melodrama became such a cultural art form that the Argentine news emulated its form. The projection of news, events, and culture shaped the mass public zeitgeist in favor of the

1. Eva Peron, *La razon de me vida* (Buenos Aires, 1952), 32.

populist message of Perón. Historian Daniel James argued that a melodrama is a form of class-based discourse of symbols and images that produce a set of conventions readily available in popular Argentine cultural expressions ranging from pulp fiction to domestic radio shows, to tangos and theatrical productions.² Radio waves were a special resource in the creation of a national identity. The fact that Perón cruised the popular culture on radio waves to rise to political power is central to understanding how his fall was due to a lack of authoritarian policy control of the radio.

Perón accessed the melodrama format to gain political power, which demonstrates a key example of how Perón used radio audiences to become president. Perón's personal melodrama can be divided into acts. In Act I, setting the scene, the 1930s-1943, in Argentina known as the *decada infame*, the military economics destroyed the political power of the lower classes. Perón, the hero of the melodrama, was born in 1895 to a family of Italian immigrants and received a military education. Perón stayed in the military for the next thirty years of his life, climbing the military ladder to become a corporal by the 1940s. In Act II, the hero became disenchanted with the government and wanted a change. Perón rose to political power with the United Officer's Group (GOU) and then ran for president when the government opened national elections. In Act III, the hero attempted to save civilization. After winning the 1946 elections, Perón established a series of controls over radio. In Act IV, the forces gathered to challenge the leader and he started to fail. In 1950, with the Visca Commission and other forces of Peronist overreach, the government abused radio and created political openings for the opposition. The radio played a unique part of those events, specifically as the voice to the disenfranchised that were against Perón. Act V was exile,

2. Daniel James, *Dona Maria's Story: Life History, Memory, and Political Identity*, 1st ed. (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2000), 253.

because the Peronist government created fictionalized pro-Peronist propaganda to the point that audiences did not believe the government stories, oppositional forces gained access to the radio, and forces using radio to create effective counter narratives against Perón's government and destabilizing Argentina were reasons for his exile.

The historiography to answer this question is divided among Peronism, Argentine radio, and mass media studies. The primary works used for Peronist history included are: Robert Crassweller's *Perón and the Enigmas of Argentina*, Félix Luna's *Perón y su Tiempo* volumes 1-3, Silvia Mercado's *El inventor del peronismo: Raúl Apold, el cerebro oculto que cambió la política argentina*, David Rock's *Argentina, 1516-1982: From Spanish Colonization to the Falklands War*.³ Argentine radio and mass media historiography focused on: Matthew B. Karusch's *Culture of Class: Radio and Cinema in the Making of a Divided Argentina, 1920-1946*, Carlos Ulanovsky's *Días de Radio: historia de la radio argentina*, and Pablo Sirvén's *Perón y los medios de comunicación: la conflictive relación de los gobiernos justicialistas con la prensa, 1943-2011*.⁴ There is little overlap between the two distinct historiographies. In several instances the secondary historiography and primary historiography agreed on events, but disagreed on exact moments. When in doubt I followed the primary sources.

3. Robert D. Crassweller, *Perón and the Enigmas of Argentina* (New York, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987); Félix Luna, *Perón y sus tiempos: La Argentina era una fiesta 1946-1949*, vol. 1st, 3 vols., 8th ed. (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Editorial Sudamericana, 2000); Félix Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo: La Comunidad Organizada (1950-1952)*, vol. 2nd, 3 vols., 5th ed. (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Sudamericana, 2013); Félix Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo: El Régimen Exhausto (1953-1955)*, vol. 3rd, 3 vols. (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Sudamericana, 2013); Silvia D. Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo: Raúl Apold, el cerebro oculto que cambió la política argentina*, 3rd ed. (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Grupo Editorial Planeta S.A.I.C., 2013); David Rock, *Argentina, 1516-1982: From Spanish Colonization to the Falklands War*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

4. Matthew B. Karush, *Culture of Class: Radio and Cinema in the Making of a Divided Argentina, 1920-1946* (Durham North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2012); Carlos Ulanovsky et al., *Días de Radio: historia de la radio argentina*, 4th ed. (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Espasa Calpe, 1996); Pablo Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación: la conflictive relación de los gobiernos justicialistas con la prensa, 1943-2011* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1984).

The maps incorporated in this work started with digitizing information from Jorge Noguier's work, *Radiodifusion en la Argentina*.⁵ The author listed all the Argentine radio stations and locations in 1983. The second step was to digitize the radio information from 1920-1944 within Robert H. Claxton's work, *From Parsifal to Peron: Early Radio in Argentina, 1920-1944*, and to correlate the radio stations listed in both works.⁶ Step three was the digitization of the works *Data and rates of radio stations in the other American Republics and Puerto Rico*, *Broadcasting Stations of the World: According to Country and City*, *Broadcasting Stations of the World: According to Country and City 11th ed.*, *Broadcasting Stations of the World: According to Country and City 12th ed.*, and *Broadcasting Stations of the World: According to Country and City 13th ed.*⁷ Noguier's work was the only one that listed broadcasting antennae locations, and because that information was post-dated in the 1980s, I decided to use radio station office street addresses from the 1940s and 1950s to ensure accuracy. After digitization of these works, I then took the radio station address listed to Google Earth and proceeded to find Latitude and Longitude coordinates for each radio station. Once I had coordinates from Google Earth, Mary Ann Widener converted these coordinates through ESRI's ArcGIS to WGS North and WGS Eastings.

5. Jorge Eduardo Noguier, *Radiodifusión en la Argentina*, 1st ed. (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Editorial Bien Común, 1985).

6. Robert H. Claxton, *From Parsifal to Peron: Early Radio in Argentina, 1920-1944* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007).

7. *Data and Rates of Radio Stations in the Other American Republics and Puerto Rico* (Washington D.C.: United States Office of Inter-American Affairs, 1945); *Broadcasting Stations of the World: According to Country and City* (Washington D.C.: Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service War Department, 1946); *Broadcasting Stations of the World: According to Country and City*, 11th ed., Foreign Broadcast Information Service (Washington D.C.: United States Government, 1952); *Broadcasting Stations of the World: According to Country and City*, 13th ed., Foreign Broadcast Information Service (Washington D.C.: United States Government, 1955).

The Path Loss Distance Formula, $R_r = P_T - P_L - G_T - G_R - L_T - L_R$ (Radio received= Power transmitted – Path Loss – Transmission gained – Transmission lost –Receiver gain – Receiver Lost) is used to calculate radio reception distances.⁸ The first step was the conversion of Power transmitted to dB/m^2 , with the formula $P_T = 20 \log_{10} F - 32.4$, where F = Frequency. The next step was to convert L_P to distance, $L_P = 32.4 - 20 \log_{10} D$, D = Distance. I then looked up standard radio receiver rates that put $G_T = 3$, $G_R = 3$, $L_T = 1$, $L_R = 1$. Because there was not accurate model information, I consulted Claxton's work about common radios and looked up this information, there -4dB/m^2 was the average radio receiver's reception threshold. Mary Ann Widener generated accurate maps from this information. If the radio station had two different power listings, I proceeded to use Noguier's example of the first listed as East, the second West.⁹ The results were in miles from the radial antennae. This information is not geographic specific and is based on clear direct lines between receiver and transmitter.

The voting results came directly from the newspaper *La Prensa* in both 1946 and 1948. The printed Presidential election of 1946 results lasted from February 24-April 9, 1946, and the Constitutional Convention elections lasted between December 10-17, 1948.¹⁰ The reporting from *La Prensa* was sporadic and unclear on total election information. An example is from the province Tucumán in 1948, where the newspaper did not print any election results from the jurisdiction but instead gave a total provincial result on December 20, 1948. The maps accurately reflect voting on a provincial level and radio reception.

8. Alade Olusope Michael, "Standardization of Attenuation Formula for Radio Waves Propagation through Free Space (LOS) Communication Links," *Science Journal of Physics*, May 17, 2012, 2–4.

9. Noguier, *Radiodifusión en la Argentina*, 320–335.

10. "Las Elecciones Presidenciales en la País," *La Prensa*, April 9, 1946.

Latin American historians and writers readily state that Perón's political base was the urban working class, yet as the maps demonstrate, Perón had massive political support from the rural agrarian populations, as demonstrated in Figure 2 on page 54. Perón combined politics and popular culture on radio to forge a political base in the urban and rural sectors in Argentina. The radio was a powerful tool that Perón effectively used between 1945 and 1950. The cultural figure of Eva Duarte and melodramas are one example of how Perón used radio culture to create a political base. The political drama that unfolded between 1950 to 1955 highlighted the central tensions within the Peronist government and demonstrated how effective control of media can transition to propaganda. Perón's use of the radio as a political tool meant that his political melodrama went far beyond the upper echelons of political power, but presented nightly in Argentine homes throughout the nation.

CHAPTER 1: ARGENTINE CULTURE THAT ENABLED THE RISE OF PERÓN.

Introduction

On June 4, 1946, on a late night program in a small radio recording booth in Córdoba, a new musical genre was born: *Cuarteto*.¹ Augusto Marzano, a local railroad worker, headed the Cuarteto Característico Leo band that incorporated indigenous, African, and European musical styles. Radio station LV3, known as Radio Córdoba, aired the program for two hours and due to its popularity extended the band's contract to perform for the next two years.² The program's target audience was rural working classes and newly arriving migrant workers to the capital city.³ *Cuarteto* became a symbol of the working classes in Córdoba because of the Radio Córdoba broadcast, thus demonstrating how radio was an important medium in the creation of cultural and class identity in the middle of the twentieth century Argentina.

Radio synthesized local images from rural, traditionalist folk music and tango to create nationalist Argentine images. One of the most illustrative programs that demonstrates mass media culture that integrated rural images and tango melodrama was the popular show *Chispazos de Tradición* (Sparks of Tradition). The variety show featured such rigid masculine individuals like the Matero, or the fugitive *gaucho*, against the comedic hero

1. Jane L. Florine, *Cuarteto Music and Dancing from Argentina: In Search of the Tunga-Tunga in Córdoba* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 22.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

Churrinche, who saved the heroine.⁴ The serial shows played folk music and were popular with working class women.⁵ *Chispazos de Tradición* demonstrates that the integration of *gaucho* folk music with melodrama was the first instance of transculturation in Argentine radio. The mass media culture that featured shows like *Chispazos de Tradición* demonstrate why radio was an important mass media tool in the creation of a cultural landscape that brought together two very different subcultures in Argentina. The medium of the radio broadcast combined the rural *gaucho* culture and populist message in a family friendly format. The technology of the radio was central to how Perón's ideas and political rhetoric was coupled together with the popular culture of lower classes.

Like any great melodrama, the characteristics and eventual downfall are defined by Perón's setting and surroundings. Argentina had a dual cultural identity of the urban tango and the rural *gaucho*. The tango had a populist message that pitted the poor against the rich. The folk music language and culture had cultural roots in the colonial period and highlighted life in the rural agrarian sector of the countryside. Perón's political speeches and use of the radio was the first large scale impact where rural and urban cultures came together. The push and pull by critics made the folk music's influence on the tango a way to raise the tango from a lower class barrio origin to a national identity of Argentina.⁶ These types of cross-cultural symbols were the basis of Perón's messages that gave him political support of two different regions of Argentina.

4. Ulanovsky et al., *Días de Radio: historia de la radio argentina*, 96. Churrinche was named after the famous Argentine bird that shares the same flamboyant costume as the hero.

5. Ibid., 89, Herbert M. Clark, "Argentine Radio Time Is 98% Commercial: United States Agencies Lead Placements; Programs Follow American Type," *Broadcasting*, September 15, 1947, 204, American Radio History.

6. Matthew B. Karush, "Populism, Melodrama, and the Market," in *The New Cultural History of Peronism*, ed. Matthew B. Karush and Oscar Chamosa (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2010), 33.

Argentine radio at the time was the second largest radio network in the world, behind only the United States.⁷ By 1943, four major networks that broadcasted music, lectures, news, variety shows, and special events were key to promoting a solidified mass media culture. The rise of early radio and the accompaniment of cultural nationalist propaganda in the northwestern provinces were the initial starting point of Perón's political strategy to gain political support from the lower classes. Perón's reliance on re-education of the population through cultural media outlets was why radio was a political tool of Argentine nationalism. The projection of news, events, and culture shaped the mass public zeitgeist in favor of the populist message of Perón. The fact that Perón cruised the popular waves as a method to rise quickly to power demonstrates radio's power in Argentina. Radio waves were a special resource in the creation of a national identity.

Physics defines waves as an oscillation of time and space that is accompanied by transference of energy.⁸ The time was 1920s-1946, the space was Argentina, and the energy was the populist mass media culture that arose on the radio. The political paradigm that Perón used was the cultural wave of populist language that was prevalent on the radio. The transference of energy from the nineteenth century's political domination by the oligarchy to the working class-based rhetoric for change was due to the waves of immigration to Argentina at the turn of the century. The defining feature of the Peronist regime was the volatility that arose from the populist demands which were set against achievable political results. Yet Perón crested because of his lack of amplitude control of Argentine culture. The stagnation in Argentina's political message, combined with Perón's inability fully to control broadcasts, was one of the most influential factors for Peron's eventual downfall and exile

7. Claxton, *From Parsifal to Peron: Early Radio in Argentina, 1920-1944*, ix.

8. Merriam Webster, "Wave," *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield: Merriam-Webster Incorporated, 2007), 1415.

from Argentina. This chapter examines the rise of both popular music, such as the tango and folk music, and the rise of Perón as populist leader in October 1945.

Nineteenth Century Argentina

The cultural divisions in Argentina run deep and vary over the vast geography of the country. The different geography gave rise to different cultures in Argentina, a rural folk tradition and an urban tango. The two musical cultures were significant for the mass media culture that was on the radio. Historian Daniel James traced the rise of the “heretical” rhetoric of the populist tango message to 1930-1943, also known as the “Infamous Decade” (*decada infame*).⁹ The problem with James’s argument is that the origin of the tango and populist rhetoric had already been culturally embedded in Argentine history since the nineteenth century. The nineteenth-century political debates led directly to the increase in industrialization and immigration. Industrialization and immigration fed one another with problems for the larger Argentine society, thus the two major issues were the cultural backdrop for the rise in working class culture in the twentieth century.

Nineteenth-century Argentina defined the political ideals of the nation and solidified the future of the country. Argentina has the features of a traditional colonial system. The economic basis of Argentina through the mid-twentieth century was farm exports, specifically cattle, wheat and barley.¹⁰ The political situation in Argentina was a division of liberalism and conservatism based directly on economic control of the land. The conservative

9. Daniel James, *Resistance and Integration: Peronism and the Argentine Working Class, 1946-1976*, Cambridge Latin American Studies (New York, N.Y., United States: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 14.

10. John Charles Chasteen, *Born in Blood & Fire: A Concise History of Latin America, Second Edition*, Second Edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005), 181–211; Benjamin Keen and Keith Haynes, *A History of Latin America*, 8th ed. (Boston, Mass., United States: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publisher, 2009), 243–255.

base, with roots in the colonial period, held control of a large concentration of farmlands. The conservatives wanted Argentina to follow a protectionist economy that favored farms. The liberals defined the conservatives as the oligarchy. The liberals, on the other hand, believed that Argentina needed to follow a policy of *laissez-faire* based on the British model of economics.¹¹

The liberal Argentine intellectuals were interested in how to advance Argentina economically. The most prominent figure in this camp was Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1811-1888).¹² The answer for Sarmiento was the establishment of capitalism, technology like railroads and steam engines to provide for commerce, education to enable a forward movement of the population, a complete removal of the “barbarian” *gaucho*, and a massive influx of immigrants from Europe.¹³ He saw Europe as the bastion of civilization because it had technology and industry. He thought that immigrants could create Argentine industry and, coupled with education, Argentina could have a better future. Sarmiento’s ideas became the basis for liberal Argentine policy from the middle to the end of the nineteenth century. The policies advocated by Sarmiento became the foundation of Argentina’s economic changes during the latter part of the nineteenth century. An early success for Sarmiento’s policies was education. In 1869, the first government census described four-fifths of the Argentine population as illiterate; by 1889, after Sarmiento’s education reforms, education was comparable to many advanced European countries.¹⁴ Education, by the early twentieth

11. Chasteen, *Born in Blood & Fire*, 181–211; Keen and Haynes, *A History of Latin America*, 243–255. Industrialization fed directly into population growth, which because of monetary problems, fed into populism at the turn of the twentieth century.

12. Chasteen, *Born in Blood & Fire*, 168–169; Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Facundo: Or, Civilization and Barbarianism* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1998), i–xxxii.

13. Sarmiento, *Facundo*, 9–56; Chasteen, *Born in Blood & Fire*, 168–169; Keen and Haynes, *A History of Latin America*, 243–255.

14. James, *Resistance and Integration*, 118.

century, also became a central tenement of Perón's rhetoric; his policies were a direct result of Sarmiento's advocacy.

The transformation of Argentina from mid-nineteenth century liberalism to the twentieth century populism was a direct result of industrialization. The Argentine government followed established positivist policies to create an economy that was stable through an unwavering government.¹⁵ The large landed oligarchy became wealthier due to these positivist policies. The high water mark for positivism in Argentina was during the presidency of Julio A. Roca.¹⁶ While Roca's policies had an enormous impact in the transformation of Argentina into an industrial power, the lack of Argentine investments meant that foreign capital was critical in making these policies a reality.¹⁷ The heavy investment by the British in Argentine industries, such as railroads, meant that the advancements resulted in the economic neo-colonization of Argentina. The irony that foreign investors directed Argentine economic development became a rally cry for nationalists at the turn of the twentieth century and a key tenet of Perón's rhetoric in the 1940s and 1950s. The first result of early political adherence to positivism was the ability to industrialize. Argentine's key to industrialization was immigration. Yet massive immigration produced a series of problems that resulted in the emergence of nationalism.

15. Positivism was an intellectual movement in the late nineteenth century started by Augusto Comtè that believed through political stability that economic stability would follow.

16. Rock, *Argentina, 1516-1982*, 118–189; Chasteen, *Born in Blood & Fire*, 168–169; Keen and Haynes, *A History of Latin America*, 243–255.

17. David Viñas, Gabriela Nouzeilles, and Graciela Montaldo, eds., "Tactics of Positivism," in *The Argentine Reader, History Culture Politics*, Latin America Readers (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2002), 161–70. Historian David Viñas argued that Roca's adherence to positivist philosophy could be seen in his, "methodological removal of lands from Indians, centralization, modernizing conservatism, ferocious 'racial homogenization,' strong state control, dutiful agreement with the rites of global capitalism, making national the provincial oligarchies and the army as opposed to local militias, reaffirming the borders and articulation of railroads, telegraph wires, and the single port of Buenos Aires into a unified system." Viñas's reforms that he credits to Roca were not industrial, but they laid the foundation to the incorporation of the rural sector into the Argentine economy.

The transformation of Argentina from nineteenth century to twentieth century came from a mantra of “to govern is to populate” (“*gobernar es poblar*”). The liberal governments in Europe began to encourage immigration from southwestern Europe to a large degree. Immigration began in the mid-1880s and continued until the Great Depression. The Argentine census of 1895 counted 3.9 million people; by 1914 there were 7.8 million people in Argentina.¹⁸ Most of these immigrants with industrial experience were from the middle classes of European countries like Italy, Spain, Portugal, and France. The liberal Argentine governments promoted the idea that the European immigrants built up Argentine industrialization. The concentration of the immigrant population was in Buenos Aires. Industrialization caused a surge in problems related to the flow of immigrants into Buenos Aires. Two of the main features of Perón’s populism originated from the immigration and industrialization at the turn of the twentieth century.

The first major problem was employment, or lack thereof. The Argentine economy was relatively small in international comparisons. The economy was predominantly farming at the end of the nineteenth century. Most of the industrial buildup of Argentina focused on the cattle industry for export. The second problem was the limited number of jobs available. Sarmiento’s selling point for immigration was that immigrant skills would revolutionize Argentina’s economy. The major irony of the immigrant situation was the limited ability of the Argentine economy to absorb a tidal wave of immigrants. The most common employment that absorbed the large numbers of European immigrants was in non-industrialized jobs, such as the lifting and carrying associated with the waterfront,

18. Rock, *Argentina*, 165.

construction sites, railroad stations, or the wholesale and retail outlets.¹⁹ The diminished job market shaped emerging working class identity.

The working class frustration caused by the lack of industrial jobs, limited housing and limited political access coalesced into a political identity. The traditional Argentine political divide between liberal and conservative had no place for immigrants. Adding to immigrants' political problems was the establishment of patron-client relationships in Argentine politics that favored people in established relationships over the newly arriving immigrants. To keep immigrants out of Argentine politics, non-citizens could not vote. The Argentine Congress kept the process of naturalization restricted to limit first and second generation immigrants from participation.²⁰ Neither the liberal nor conservative elements in Argentine politics were interested in the issues that affected the immigrant population. The Radical Party (*Union Civica Radical*), which emerged in 1891, redressed the political needs of the immigrant population. The message that the Radical Party presented was a populist dichotomy of "The Regime" that had political and economic power pitted against the working class.²¹ The reforms advocated, rhetoric used was Argentina needed to institute a democratic government, became the cause of the Radical Party. The language disguised its intent of replacement of the landed oligarchy and slight reforms.²² The Radical Party crescendo was the election of Hipólito Yrigoyen in 1928. The working class's political

19. James Scobie, "The Paris of South America," in *The Argentina Reader, History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Gabriela Nouzeilles and Graciela Montaldo, Latin America Readers (Durham North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2002), 177.

20. Rock, *Argentina*, 189–190. The Sáenz Peña Law of 1912 extended male suffrage to immigrants. Historian David Rock argued that the Sáenz Peña, "law did not extend voting rights to noncitizens, nor did the government make any attempt to simplify the cumbersome naturalization procedures." The limitation of immigrants into the political state was a central issue for immigrants searching for a political identity that Peronism would help rectify.

21. *Ibid.*, 185.

22. *Ibid.*, 162–191; Chasteen, *Born in Blood & Fire*, 226–227; Keen and Haynes, *A History of Latin America*, 243–255.

identity had a distinct link to populist rhetoric and messages that Perón later utilized for political gain.

Argentine Education and Nationalism

One of the most important rhetorical political devices Perón employed was the promotion of education. Education equated to advancement, in both status and economic terms. While the advancement of personal skills was undeniable, hidden underneath the rhetoric of education was the idea of “improvement.” Embedded in the idea of improvement was the political reality of the use of coded language that gave political advantages for politicians who utilized it correctly. One of the fundamental ways that education benefitted the population was the increase in Argentine literacy rates. By the 1920s, Argentina had one of the world’s highest.²³ In broad terms, improvement meant the removal of previous political ideas and the instilment of populist ideology. To improve a population, the Peronist government had to look to education as the main tool to achieve this goal. At the turn of the twentieth century, the movement by the upper classes in Argentina first employed the tool of education to assimilate and integrate immigrants into what they considered “proper” Argentine society. The careful use of education to improve the immigrant working class culture into Argentine national culture offers a valuable tool in evaluating Perón’s successes and failures at integration of the working class during his government.

The working classes were composed of a majority of immigrants that carried their European culture to Argentina. The question for many intellectuals was two-fold. First, what was an “Argentine?” This raised other questions with several possible answers. Was Argentina the rural farm worker who was quietly disappearing? Was Argentina the rapidly-

23. Claxton, *From Parsifal to Perón*, 3.

modernizing urban city of immigrants? Historian Nicolas Shumway has argued that the division arose because, “Argentina as a nation divided not by political ideologies but by economic realities with the major players being the interior against Buenos Aires, the poor against the ‘oligarchy’—a disapproving epithet for the porteño wealthy which during this period first entered popular usage.”²⁴ The disparity between the ideological divisions of interior versus Buenos Aires was the central issue for the formulation of Argentine national identity. Perón integrated two key aspects into his political platform: first, he integrated both rural and urban workers as his base of political support; and second, he integrated the oligarchy and working class as a class-based populist rhetorical ploy to gain support.

The second question that plagued many intellectuals was how to integrate this new population into Argentine society. Education became the answer to incorporating the immigrant working class into Argentine society.²⁵ The formation of an Argentine national identity at the turn of the twentieth century was a slow process. The difference between the littoral, or the interior of Argentina, and the cosmopolitan culture of Buenos Aires created two distinct political identities that the radio began to integrate both cultures. The question was what would Argentine education look like if there were two distinct cultural identities in Argentina?²⁶ Early twentieth-century Argentine education took the position that integration of the mythologies of the past combined with cultural symbols such as the *gaucho* was the answer.

24. Nicolas Shumway, *The Invention of Argentina* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 216.

25. Education as a political policy was first advocated by Domingo Faustino Sarmiento in the middle of the nineteenth century. Sarmiento articulated a need for immigration into Argentina to advance the country. Sarmiento also argued for education as a means to advance Argentina. The link between education and advancement comes from positivism. Sarmiento was one of the first to advocate positivism in Argentina.

26. Oscar Chamosa, *The Argentine Folklore Movement: Sugar Elites, Criollo Workers, and the Politics of Cultural Nationalism, 1900-1955* (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 2010), i–35; Rock, *Argentina*, 131–211; Keen and Haynes, *A History of Latin America*, 243–255; Sarmiento, *Facundo*, 1–53.

The crystallization of Argentine nationalism at the end of the nineteenth to the early part of the twentieth century was central to education. Historians of nationalism point out that the formation of a national identity comes directly from mythologizing the past.²⁷ The problem for Argentina at the turn of the twentieth-century focused on answering the question of what was the Argentine cultural past? The swelling numbers of immigrants for the last part of the nineteenth century meant that Argentines had to examine critically who they were. To many, the traditionalist poem of *Martin Fierro* that celebrated the *gaucho* culture was the answer. Argentines looked desperately to the last *gauchos* as a method to return to a glorious past. The political reality was that they were gone, but the mythological past gave an opportunity for political leaders to expand their ambitions.

Early twentieth century education held fast to the idea of improvement of individuals. Improvement meant inculcation of Argentine cultural symbols and heritage into subaltern groups within the country. The northwestern provinces of Tucumán, Salta, and Jujuy were the most isolated from the Buenos Aires immigrant influx. As Argentine nationalists surveyed the countryside, they focused on the provinces that had the least contact with immigrants, because immigrants rarely had the money to settle away from the Buenos Aires province.²⁸ The northwestern provinces were led by conservative elites, and the lack of political representation of the working class provided for a situation that gave advantage to the elites for reforms.²⁹

27. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. (New York, New York: Verso, 2006), 26; Rebecca Earle, *The Return of the Native: Indians and Myth-Making in Spanish America 1810-1930* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke, 2007), 86–89. Historian Rebecca Earle interprets Argentina's mythologizing indigenous past, such as links to the Incan empire, as evidence of Argentine nationalist attempts to reimagining a past.

28. Keen and Haynes, *A History of Latin America*, 243–255; Chasteen, *Born in Blood & Fire*, 189, 211–215; Rock, *Argentina, 1516-1982: From Spanish Colonization to the Falklands War*, 166–210.

29. Chamosa, *The Argentine Folklore Movement*, 1–35.

The sugar barons held political control and enabled vast educational reforms for the working class groups in the northwestern provinces. The educational reforms were directed at the sugar barons' children; and as an unintended result, the working class children were also educated. The working class in these northwestern provinces were not European immigrants, they were *criollos*—a mix between Spanish and indigenous racial heritages and cultures, who were considered outsiders to Argentine proper culture.³⁰ Many of the Argentine nationalists believed that this mixture between the cultures was where the true Argentina was to be found. This gave a political advantage to the sugar elites who were actively promoting the region as a bastion of Argentine heritage.

The main financier of this reformulation of national culture was Ernesto Padilla, a sugar baron who financed archeological surveys in the region to exploit a mythical image of Argentina.³¹ Many of the archeological findings simply gave Padilla what he wanted, scientific proof of the last vestiges of Argentina's cultural heritage. Padilla's patronage of scientific findings gave him political leverage in the establishment of these archeological findings.³² Padilla followed the archeological findings with a series of educational reforms. Schools were established for the *criollo* children to learn skills such as reading and writing. Padilla's brother became a provincial legislator who enacted the program for students to learn both folk songs and dances as heritage.³³ The Padilla brothers also used the local language and customs for political advantage, a tactic that Perón later employed in the 1940s.

The nationalist education movement had a series of effects that Perón incorporated into his political paradigm. The longest-lasting legacies of the educational reforms were the

30. Karush, "Populism, Melodrama, and the Market," 26–34.

31. Chamosa, *The Argentine Folklore Movement*, 10–62.

32. Karush, "Populism, Melodrama, and the Market," 34–40.

33. Chamosa, *The Argentine Folklore Movement*, 10–62.

rise of the folklore movement in Argentina and besides the education of the northeastern population. Folk music had a direct impact on both the mass media culture's language and on the tango in the 1920s-1930s, both of which were central to Perón's rise to political power. The second legacy that nationalist education had on Argentina was the return of the *gaucho* to political prominence. Perón constantly framed himself as a *gaucho* president. The *gaucho* image gave Perón access to images that the rural voters could understand and incorporate Perón's identifying image as familiar. For example, in his first presidential election, Perón carried 62.8% of the vote in Salta and 67.9% in Jujuy, demonstrating how masterfully Perón utilized the image of *gaucho* in the northwestern provinces.³⁴

The Cultural Waves of Radio: Transmitting to a Dual Culture

The question in recent scholarship has been the power of radio in the transformation of a culture. Many current historians discredit the singular power of radio to change any culture. Historians, like Mathew B. Karush and Oscar Chamosa, point to the fact that artists write music for the capitalist market.³⁵ Their argument is two-fold: first, a top down approach with the creation of mass media cannot occur. There are hundreds of artists who compose works for mass consumption. Mass media then is a projection of an organic composition and not directed from above by any government. Secondly, music is a commodity that consumers produce based on taste. Music has to speak to the consumer in order for the purchase to take place. Music then becomes a reflecting agent of the culture of the consumer, strengthening the bottom-up argument of historians.

34. "Las Elecciones Presidenciales en la Pais," 10.

35. Karush, "Populism, Melodrama, and the Market"; Oscar Chamosa, *The Argentine Folklore Movement* (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 2010).

Certainly the artistic community presents a reflection of the unique culture, and this is the key reason that the artistic work has broad appeal, but without the capitalist intermediary of marketers, the artistic work would not be available for the consumer to hear. Marketers transform both the musical message and the content within which to sell the materials. A primary example of an artist who used this type of marketing from Argentina would be Carlos Gardel. Gardel was a Buenos Aires tango singer from the 1920s and 1930s. His cosmopolitan image was a suit and tie. When the folklore movement that started in 1925 in Argentina shifted importance to the countryside, Gardel donned a *gaucho* outfit to project his rural roots.³⁶ The taste of the popular consumer is more important in a capitalist system than the artistic message. For this reason, there is a sifting of popular underclass culture by elite intellectuals and music industry owners to cast a specific narrative.

Another critical aspect of culture creation is the critics' response to art forms. Critics act as a culture police. Their opinions are preserved, and their views on art and culture are held at a higher value than those of ordinary people. The critics' words shape the intellectual community around the art form. The influence the critic has on art is significant because this shapes the future release of that form of art. The capitalist system of marketing, coupled with the critics' value judgment to influence future creations of art, are the key reasons that mass culture is a top-down approach. Without the backing of either the critics or the capitalist marketing music would not be projected into the culture.³⁷

36. Karush, *Culture of Class*, 56.

37. After reading Karush's work, where the author argues that consumer popular culture is driven by an organic development of culture at the bottom and continues to the top. I have major problems with this line of argument, while I generally agree that popular consumer culture is organic at low levels, it is when publicity comes into play that the organic roots become coopted by the capitalist system for exploitation to connect with audiences. The transformation is compounded when critics, who have no official power, offer their ideas and interpretations of art when the coopt starts to become increasingly noticeable. The role of the critic is to define good and bad, yet, especially in a very literate country like Argentina, the critic's publications in newspapers become more potent than any individual's interpretation/thoughts of works. Thus, the critic acts like a "police"

The radio functions as a unique crossroads between popular mass media culture and political conduit. The situation of the radio dial brings both the news and entertainment to the listener. A critical examination of radio's mass media culture of songs, shows, news events, and government regulations reveal the relationship Argentines had with the radio. In the 1920s and 1930s, there were two major forms of Argentine-based music, the folk music and the tango. Each musical genre represented a political constituency for Perón to incorporate with his political propaganda. The capitalist system of sifting through artists and messages to present a sanitized culture for mass consumption is specifically why the radio as a conductor of mass media culture needs full examination. The tango's populist "heretical" rhetoric was constantly displayed on the radio, further enmeshing Argentine culture and populist messages that Perón directly used.³⁸ There are many other examples of popular mass media culture in Argentina examples including movies, fiction, and poetry. The radio was a unique technology because it instantaneously linked all receivers of the medium together in an "imagined community" of the moment.³⁹

The cultural divisions of Argentina can be seen in the musical cultures, such as the tango that arose in Buenos Aires and the folk music from the northwestern provinces. These two musical cultures dominated the radio from the 1920s to the 1950s. The two worked in tandem to develop both language and images that translated into political rhetoric. The two musical forms represented two lower-class constituencies on which Perón built his political

to announce what is good and what is bad artistically. The system reinforces itself by publications and works from corporations and printed publications.

38. James, *Resistance and Integration*, 16.

39. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 3–65. This is stretching Anderson's work, specifically the idea of the community as resulting from news. The transference between reading and listening is wide, but the idea that the cultural filter placed on news comes from locality is relevant.

base. The radio expanded musical genres into variety shows and other artistic forms that baked in the proverbial cake of Argentine culture and populist rhetoric.

Tango

The tango originated from the immigrant working class culture in the barrios of Buenos Aires. The immigrant working class population was predominantly male. The working class culture seemed to center around hyper-sexual men looking to escape the harsh realities of low-class jobs. Drunkenness and violence, especially knife fights, were a key component to these early performances.⁴⁰ The tango originated in and around the brothels of the capital city.⁴¹ The migration of the tango to the upper-classes occurred through the prostitutes who carried the dance with them as they performed for their upper-class elite clientele.⁴² The upper-class men came to appreciate tango as a legitimate form in the mid-1920s as the genre started to lose some of the stigmas of the bordellos.

Tango lyrics were symbolically representative of the growing working class urban culture. Tango lyrics incorporated ideas of city life, unrequited love, distrust of government, and powerlessness. An example of powerlessness present in tango lyrics comes from the song “Cambalache,” where the author expresses, “There always have been thieves,/traitors and victims of fraud,/happy and bitter people,/valuables and imitations/But, that the twentieth

40. Simon Collier, “Birth of the Tango,” in *The Argentina Reader, History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Gabriela Nouzeilles and Garciela Montaldo (Durham, North Carolina: Duke, 2002), 200.

41. Rock, *Argentina*, 176; Collier, “Birth of the Tango,” 196. Early in the twentieth century, Buenos Aires was well known as a center of white slave traffic from Europe, with over three hundred registered brothels in the city in 1913. Simon Collier argued that the tango was, “In its early stages, the Argentine tango was mainly the dance and music of the urban poor, the socially unacceptable, and the disinherited of Buenos Aires’ suburbios (working-class neighborhoods). In the dance academies and bordellos, young upper-class men joined the lower classes in their appreciation of the tango.”

42. Collier, “Birth of the Tango,” 196–202; Chasteen, *Born in Blood & Fire*, 240. Coupled with the fact that tango became synonymous with Argentina, thus, like jazz, had to remove the social stigma of where it originated. Socially speaking, who would have the right to say that the upper-classes were wrong? Thus, when members of the upper-class accepted tango, it gave the genre legitimacy.

century/is a display/of insolent malice,/nobody can deny it anymore.”⁴³ The tango lyrics demonstrate the bitterness and the tragic qualities of the tango worldview. Through to the 1920s, the tango remained a music of the cosmopolitan urban working class culture.⁴⁴ The need to present a more acceptable version of the tango’s lyrics, message, and respect had to occur to elevate this art from bordellos to a higher more acceptable plane.⁴⁵

Folk Music

Folk music originated as a sub-culture at the turn of the twentieth century.⁴⁶ What became known as Folklore Movements music reflected the working culture of the northwestern provinces. As politicians such as Padilla began to use the folk culture for political gains, the music began to change. As the educational reforms of the music in school curricula established a new generation with ties to folk music, the celebration of *gaucho* culture returned as a major force within Argentine culture. Folk music was also instrumental in establishing rural folklore values. Audiences saw music from artists like Atahualpa Yupanqui as authentic folk music.⁴⁷

Beginning in the 1910s, Argentina experienced an internal migration from the interior to cosmopolitan cities. After World War I, Argentina was in an economic depression. Argentines were dependent on foreign countries for industrial products; this was a central part of the Dependency Theory of the late nineteenth century, and they wanted to produce

43. Enrique Santos Discepolo, *Cambalache*, Song (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1935).

44. Collier, “Birth of the Tango,” 169–202; Karush, *Culture of Class: Radio and Cinema in the Making of a Divided Argentina, 1920-1946*, 1–65.

45. This was comparable to Jazz in the United States context.

46. Chamosa, *The Argentine Folklore Movement*. Historian Oscar Chamosa argued that the Folklore Movement originated specifically from the Northwestern provinces. His argument lacks analysis of folk music from throughout Argentina.

47. *Ibid.*, 151.

their own products.⁴⁸ The strain of World War I on the Argentine economy spilled over to immigration. In 1918, with high unemployment, many workers and politicians in Buenos Aires started to realize how problematic a large influx of Europeans into the population was for employment rates.⁴⁹ The movement for unemployment originated in the Pampas in 1919 and was due primarily to economic displacement by mechanization.⁵⁰ The low wages meant that workers suffered. The hope for prosperity in the city drew many of the rural workers towards Buenos Aires.⁵¹ The internal migration throughout Argentina was another reason that Perón was interested in folk culture.⁵² The limited inflow of immigrants and the growing need for industrial workers meant that internal migration from the litoral to Buenos Aires was imminent. The new migrants to Buenos Aires became a part of the working classes, the new migrants became the lowest level among the working class.

Folk music also includes *Cuarteto* music from Córdoba. *Cuarteto* music is usually dance music that is stacatto with the accent on the off-beat.⁵³ As the capital city of Córdoba expanded population and industrialization, rural audiences who came to symbolize the music transformed into industrial workers.⁵⁴ The different types of folk music were symbolic of the transformation of Argentina during the *decada infame*.

48. Chasteen, *Born in Blood & Fire*, 217–249, 251; Keen and Haynes, *A History of Latin America*, 243–255.

49. Rock, *Argentina*, 194.

50. *Ibid.*, 176.

51. *Ibid.*, 235–237; Richard J. Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Buenos Aires: 1910-1942*, Cambridge Latin American Studies 74 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 106–169; Nicholas Fraser and Marysa Navarro, *Evita: The Real Life Eva Peron*, 4th ed. (New York, N.Y., United States: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), 1–24. This is the reason that Eva Duarte was interested in coming to the cosmopolitan Buenos Aires.

52. Chamosa, *The Argentine Folklore Movement*, 133–182. While Chamosa does not come out and state that Perón was interested in folk music because of the internal immigration, the author slightly implied due to his policies that favor the implementation of folk cultural studies.

53. Florine, *Cuarteto Music and Dancing from Argentina*, 23.

54. *Ibid.*, 22–23.

Early Radio's influence to 1920

Radio held a special place for the formation of nationalism in Argentina. First, early radio developed without foreign investment. The radio was one of the only industries in Argentina to originate within its own borders, playing a vital role in both promoting the two musical styles and keeping them separate. The limited amount of discretionary money for consumer goods such as records meant that the radio was the main avenue of listening to music. Argentines saw radio technology as a resource for culture and current events. Current historians, such as Matthew B. Karush, argue that the new media only deepened the cultural divisions in Argentina.⁵⁵ Until the Peronist government of the 1940s, the limited amount of discretionary money makes this a realistic point.

The guiding philosophy behind early radio was the medium's use as an educational tool. Early radio experimenters were upper-class men who saw radio as a method of promoting Argentine culture, specifically their values and beliefs of the superiority of Argentine upper class culture.⁵⁶ The promotion of European culture can be demonstrated by the first broadcast of radio in Argentina, which was Wagner's opera *Parsifal* in 1920.⁵⁷ They developed the idea that radio could help naturalize citizens and give the immigrant audience a standard of spoken Spanish. The cognitive dissonance with the upper-class' philosophy was the lack of standard spoken Spanish in Germanic operas. Many of the later regulations about radio jokes and language came from the upper-class's influence on early radio.⁵⁸

55. Karush, "Populism, Melodrama, and the Market," 2.

56. Claxton, *From Parsifal to Perón*, 8. Men like Enriquiel Paz, owner of the newspaper *La Prensa*, helped establish the first Radio Club Argentina in 1921.

57. *Ibid.*, 11. While there are significant ties of Wagner's music to the Aryan Germanic fascist nationalism that Hitler prescribed to, early Argentina radio favored music that was strongly German nationalist. There was a large German immigrant population in Argentina that favored German music.

58. Karush, "Populism, Melodrama, and the Market," 62–63; Claxton, *From Parsifal to Perón*, 104.

Radio technology produced a filter that projected a sanitized culture to the masses of Argentina. The economic interest of radio owners meant that they had to invest in keeping up with cultural trends. Critics and government regulations ensured that radio was censored for the masses. As more people had access to the radio, the radio stations themselves began to present music, shows, and events with improvement as the guiding feature. While the upper-class culture was represented throughout the 1920s to 1940s as highly European artistic music, their importance was that they simply were a part of the radio's cultural scene. Tango and folk music, on the other hand, developed the working class culture on mass media.

Dual Cultural Amplitude: the 1920s

Daniel James correctly pointed to tango's "heretical" rhetoric and placed its origins in the 1930s.⁵⁹ James analyzed an aspect of the cultural puzzle that led to Perón's political ascent. The 1920s were only the ripples in the water, though, that rose to become virtual tsunamis in the 1930s. The 1920s radio was the beginning of not only the tango as a cultural form, but also the melodrama, which combined rural traditions with the populist message from tangos in a radio program. The expansion of the populist message beyond the Buenos Aires' working class to the littoral was the reason for the importance of the radio to transmit those messages.⁶⁰

In the 1920s, the radio experienced such a tide of events that consumers began to see it as valuable. While many consumers viewed the radio as a piece of modernity that was necessary to be considered cultured, the real value of the radio was how it became a cultural

59. James, *Resistance and Integration*, 13.

60. Claxton, *From Parsifal to Perón*, 32–70. While Claxton did not combine the idea of populism and radio, he lists the radio stations and their location in the 1930s.

filter.⁶¹ The different sub-cultures in Argentina had a reason to invest in the medium. The tango, folk, and upper-class European art music were represented on the radio dial.⁶² Radio broadcasters and producers began to see the popularity of music grow and wanted to capitalize on these movements by creation of variety shows. The 1920s saw the rise of popular shows such as *Chispazos de Tradición*, a melodrama that combined the populist rhetoric found in the tangos, coupled with the rural *gaucho* of the folk music.⁶³ Because of the radio in the 1920s, both folk music and tango began to affect the other genre. The radio in the 1920s was the origin of a true national mass media culture that incorporated elements from each of the sub-cultures in Argentina and presented them as a novelty of modernity that consumers gladly immersed themselves in the national mass media culture.⁶⁴

One of the most significant aspects of 1920s radio was a lack of universal content in the broadcasts. Early Argentine radio was independently owned and operated. The Argentine government saw no need to interfere with the radio and issued a limited amount of regulations regarding broadcasting, which meant that the market determined its success or failure. The links between products and cultural groups met on the same wavelength.⁶⁵ Each station was responsible for its own programs. Sport events were one of the first main catalysts for consumers to become interested in the radio. The 1923 boxing match between Firpo and Dempsey was the first live event that caused Argentines to consider the possibility

61. Karush, *Culture of Class*, 43–177. Karush argued that Argentina incorporated "modernity."

62. Ibid.; Claxton, *From Parsifal to Peron*, 13–45.

63. Karush, *Culture of Class: Radio and Cinema in the Making of a Divided Argentina, 1920-1946*, 43–177; Chamosa, *The Argentine Folklore Movement: Sugar Elites, Criollo Workers, and the Politics of Cultural Nationalism, 1900-1955*, 4.

64. Karush, *Culture of Class: Radio and Cinema in the Making of a Divided Argentina, 1920-1946*, 43–177.

65. The program that first featured Eva Duarte was financed by the Radical Soap Company. The linkage with the cleansing power of that soap to the working-class when Perón attained political power had double meanings. Later, Eva performed on a show, *The Great Women of History*, the omens of Argentine radio for future political events.

of the radio as a necessary idea of modernity. The emergence of Argentine radio was a direct result of the Argentine emergence of a contemporary worldview.⁶⁶

One of the most interesting early radio figures to emerge was Jaime Yankelevich. He was a Bulgarian immigrant, who during his teenage years apprenticed as a theater helper. The Firpo-Dempsey fight made Yankelevich an early fortune because he sold radio headphones that financed his purchase of radio station LR3.⁶⁷ Yankelevich developed a successful formula with high quality programming that brought advertisers and listeners to his station. By the early 1930s, Yankelevich started buying smaller radio stations that were about to go bankrupt, innovating radio in Argentina through the first radio network conglomeration.⁶⁸ Yankelevich's skill in radio and his ability to find talent was what later drew Perón to Yankelevich in the 1940s.

The mass media culture that was found on radio dials through the majority of the 1920s was primarily musical representations of the tango and folk cultures. Tango was the genre that sold the most records in Argentina in the 1920s, but folk music came to dominate the early 1920s radio. The rise of folk music as a popular form meant a retooling of tango for mass consumer interests.⁶⁹ The tango in the 1920s spoke a populist message and engendered the listener to sympathize with the disenfranchised of Buenos Aires' social ladder.

Publications such as *Radiolandia* and *Caras y Caretas* were central to the repackaging of the tango for a more generalized audience. The cultural critics published articles that critiqued the tango as having qualities that were not palatable. Tastes were the guiding factor for the

66. Karush, "Populism, Melodrama, and the Market." Mathew B. Kaursh argued that Argentina created an "alternative-modernity," that is to say Argentine society incorporated modern technology and ideology, but placed their own cultural stamp on modernity. I disagree with this idea because Kaursh places U.S. or Western European modernity as the methodological point of modernity. This then places outside cultures, such as Argentina, as subordinate to U.S. or Western European conceptions.

67. Claxton, *From Parsifal to Perón*, 15 & 34–36.

68. *Ibid.*, 35–36.

69. Karush, *Culture of Class*, 91.

tango's future. By the end of the 1920s, tangos had incorporated the folk music element of topics, language, and—in performances and publicity—even folk dress.⁷⁰ The incorporation of folk elements into tango was primarily due to the folk music air-play on the radio. The tango was now more palatable to a larger section of the public, which meant that the populist rhetoric of tango lyrics had a larger constituency.

Radio not only changed the tango but also had a transformative effect on folk music, which was able to eclipse tango record sales by the end of the 1920s. Radio producers began to see the viability of the genre and developed variety shows to capture even more of the market. The early variety shows were simply music and lecture. By the end of the decade melodramas appeared in the form of folk music.⁷¹

The melodrama in Argentina combined elements of folk music with story lines that incorporated populist messages. Mathew B. Karusch argued that melodramas in Latin American history drew attention to the power to reconcile subordinate groups in a profoundly unequal society, specifically legitimized a social hierarchy, and promoted the underclass as heroes.⁷² Unfortunately, Karusch's description of melodrama legitimized the social hierarchy of urban versus rural cultures on the radio. The melodrama was not limited to radio but was also on film and literature.⁷³ The radio melodramas were unique because they incorporated the populist rhetoric and presented it to a sub culture of folk music listeners. The melodrama that began to portray this genre was *Chispazos de Tradición*.⁷⁴ The program played folk music and promoted the rural way of life. The popularity of *Chispazos de Tradición* meant

70. Ibid.

71. Claxton, *From Parsifal to Perón*, 98.

72. Karush, *Culture of Class*, 86–87.

73. Ibid., 44–177.

74. Ibid.; Chamosa, *The Argentine Folklore Movement: Sugar Elites, Criollo Workers, and the Politics of Cultural Nationalism, 1900-1955*, 4.

that folk culture had a large audience, thus solidifying a position in Argentine radio culture's lexicon.

Decada Infame: the 1930s Politics, Radio Culture, and the roots of Perón

The 1930s in Argentina has been deemed the *decada infame*, meaning the infamous decade, the period from the military overthrow of Hipólito Yrigoyen to the 1943 military coup that ousted Ramon Castillo. The 1930s low economic performance was due to the Great Depression. In Argentina, the industrial economy grew to surpass farming goods during the 1930s due, in part, to the lack of world consumption of Argentine agricultural products.⁷⁵

The change in the radio from the 1920s to the 1930s originated with the political conflict at the end of the decade. In 1928, the Radical Party had gained the presidency, displacing the traditional conservatory National Autonomist Party (Partido Autonomista Nacional) of Roca. With the election of Yrigoyen, the promotion of policies of economic nationalism started to flourish. The rise of trade unions from their low point during World War I came into vogue. To many conservatives, the rise of the trade unions was a step too far towards socialism. One of the major failures of Yrigoyen was the fact that he had not successfully attached himself to the popular culture as a means of staying in power. Yrigoyen cast himself as a *gaucho*, but he failed to link to the populist rhetoric that was emerging in the popular culture. Yrigoyen did not use the emerging medium of radio to gain political support. Perón learned from Yrigoyen's mistakes, and while in power in the 1940s, he embedded his rhetoric in populist mass media culture. By 1930, the military stepped in to take power after Yrigoyen failed to connect his message to Argentines.

75. Rock, *Argentina*, 267–268.

The military junta was a revolutionary force for radio. The junta took a proactive approach to their policies relating to the radio. The shift in practices had a ripple effect on the radio. The military junta placed severe restrictions on the Argentine radio of the 1930s. The junta realized that the popular media culture was quickly becoming filled with political messages.⁷⁶ The tango's populist rhetoric of upper against lower classes, the popularity of the melodrama's reinforcement of the tango's narrative struck fear in the military junta's leadership that the radio was against them.⁷⁷ A military general, Gustavo Franceschi, who advocated that the radio cleanse the mass media culture from negatively influencing both the youth and foreigners, influenced the new regulations.⁷⁸ The first rules enacted were the correct speaking of Spanish and removal of slang terms. One of the interesting problems that arose from this policy was that nationalist poems such as *Martin Fierro* could not be read due to the slang that filled the poem. Shows like *Chispazos de Tradición* had strict regulations against the quality of the voice speaking and against the jokes that were stated. The second transferred control of the regulation body from the ministry of the navy to the post-master. The third major regulation was allotment of specific percentages of time for live music over records. The fourth regulation for radio broadcasters was the regulation of time for folk and tango music on the radio. The junta regulated that the folk music have more air-time than tango music. While folk music was increasing in popularity, the tango consumers had more discretionary money to buy advertisers' products. The result was that radio broadcasters lengthened their day from 13 hours to 20.⁷⁹ The fifth regulation, the one that had the most consequences for radio broadcasters, was that radio transcripts had to be approved by the

76. Karush, *Culture of Class*, 194; Claxton, *From Parsifal to Peron*, 43–90.

77. Karush, *Culture of Class: Radio and Cinema in the Making of a Divided Argentina, 1920-1946*, 194; Claxton, *From Parsifal to Peron: Early Radio in Argentina, 1920-1944*, 43–90.

78. Karush, *Culture of Class*, 187.

79. Claxton, *From Parsifal to Perón*, 103.

junta before the content was aired.⁸⁰ The junta's final regulation was the nail in many radio stations' coffins.

The regulations that the junta placed on radio in the 1930s created an economic crisis for many radio stations. While this crisis was a catastrophe to many small radio stations, Argentine radio, like the phoenix, arose in a different incarnation. Small radio stations were the backbone of Argentine radio. Small radio stations had limited financial resources. With major government regulations, many of these radio stations had to close down. Entrepreneurs like Yankelevich saw a way to corner the market. By buying the failing radio stations, Yankelevich created one of the first national networks, Radio Belgrano. By the end of the 1930s, Argentina's radio dial had four major networks, Radio Belgrano, Radio Splendid, Radio Mundo, and Azul y Blanco. The establishment of four networks of radio meant that the quality of programming was standardized throughout the country. The technology of the radio would invisibly transmit culture waves throughout the countryside, fixing attention toward Buenos Aires. The process of this modernization solidified both class divisions and individual class culture.⁸¹

The Justo administration understood that radio was a medium that had political power and established LRA Radio Nacional as a way to have state radio available to influence public opinion. LRA Radio Nacional began broadcasting with one station in Buenos Aires in 1937.⁸² President Agustin P. Justo stated the goals of LRA Radio Nacional as, "an official voice that will serve subaltern conveniences, but serves the larger interests of the nation."⁸³ The goals of LRA Radio Nacional were political; it wanted to give voice to the problems of

80. *Ibid.*, 102.

81. Karush, "Populism, Melodrama, and the Market," 22, 37, & 53.

82. Carlos Ulanovsky, *La Radio Nacional: Voces de la Historia 1937-2010* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Radio y Televisión Argentina, 2010), 19.

83. *Ibid.*, 19–20.

the under classes equated to serving the interest of the nation. Programs on LRA Radio Nacional were majority music, broadcasting government procedures, and educational programs. LRA Radio Nacional's broadcasts were one of the primary vehicles that Perón would later use to broadcast his message in the interior of the country.

While the military junta's regulations were a top-down approach to attempt to control the mass media, they ultimately failed to curb radio culture. The 1930s saw the rise of more melodramas and was considered the "Golden Age of Tango." The messages contained in both the melodrama and tangos opposed the junta. The regulations breathed a new life into Argentine radio and as a result the mass media culture found on the radio expanded.⁸⁴

The national broadcasting networks in Argentina solidified the populist narratives of the tango sub-culture and the folk music melodramas. The trend-setter on Argentine radio continued to be *Chispazo de Tradición*. Radio networks were eager to expand the melodramas because advertisers paid more for this programming. Radio Mundo, by the middle of the 1930s, established its own version of rural melodrama, the radio show *The Muleteer Campfire Gaucho*. Folk music was seen as "authentic songs." Historian Chamosa argued that a key feature in the folk songs was love, not resistance.⁸⁵ To many conservatives, the folk songs were more palatable because they did not speak of revolution, unlike some tango songs.

In the 1930s, the tango was undergoing a process of revitalization. Lectures presented on the radio linked the tango to a rural past. The lectures propagated the idea that the tango had not originated in the cosmopolitan city, but from the interior of Argentina.⁸⁶ Critics in

84. Karush, *Culture of Class*, 63; Claxton, *From Parsifal to Perón*, 17.

85. Chamosa, *The Argentine Folklore Movement*, 109.

86. Karush, *Culture of Class*, 147.

Radiolandia began to describe the tango as “urban folklore.”⁸⁷ The link to the Argentine past gave tango a legitimacy as a cultural art form. Legitimacy of the tango was central to the acceptance of the tango as a political form. Historian Daniel James has argued that the impact of tango focused on “heretical” language as a basis for Perón’s rhetoric.⁸⁸

The *decada infame* created a complicated series of problems that led to the rise of Perón to the presidency in 1946. David Rock argued that the 1930s was a period that fundamentally transformed the political landscape of Argentina and which culminated with the rise of Perón.⁸⁹ The growth of the trade union movement in Argentina, the economic displacement of workers from the littoral to Buenos Aires, the increase in tensions in Europe the outbreak of World War II, and the military dictatorship that attempted to enact top-down reforms to the country’s mass media culture were all problems that plagued Argentina in the *decada infame*. The rise of trade unions was, at least in part, as a reaction to the Great Depression. The conservative upper classes dominated the political thought that guided the military’s response to the Great Depression. Nationalists advocated a form of corporatism exclusively controlled by the upper class.⁹⁰ A change in the military leadership of Argentina was from a lack of understanding a public change in mood. The economic disenfranchisement of the lower classes, whose popular culture favored a class challenge, made them feel that they had little to gain from the current state of affairs. The state sponsored a program of heavy Import Substituting Industrialization (ISI); ironically textiles were the major industry.⁹¹ The second problem that faced the flagging Argentine economy was World War II. Argentina was heavily linked with British investments for their export of

87. *Ibid.*, 143.

88. James, *Resistance and Integration*, 16.

89. Rock, *Argentina*, 214.

90. *Ibid.*, 216.

91. *Ibid.*, 233.

cattle, products and a lack of British purchases of Argentine goods was the catalyst that began to cause the military to weaken their political stature.⁹²

The Political Melodrama: the Rise of Perón 1943-1946

The rise of Juan Domingo Perón and Eva Duarte can be seen as Act I in Perón's larger political melodrama. The rise of both from relative poverty to the highest echelons of Argentine society demonstrates their charismatic ability to use broadcast media to gain social influence and political power. Both Juan and Eva used the other's skills and abilities for their mutual social and political advancement.

Juan Perón was born to Italian immigrant parents in a remote part of Patagonia in 1895. He went to military school and excelled as a leader, graduating from the War Academy in 1929.⁹³ Through the 1930s, he taught at the War Academy and slowly rose in ranks to a Colonel. Juan married Aurelia Tizón in 1926; the marriage lasted until 1935 when Aurelia died suddenly of uterine cancer.⁹⁴ For the next few years, Juan served the military as an attaché surveying the border between Chile and Argentina.⁹⁵ For his next assignment, lieutenant colonel Perón was garrisoned in Italy for an eighteen-month tour from 1939 to 1940.⁹⁶ In early 1941, Perón returned to Argentina to teach in Mendoza at a center for

92. Ibid., 268–9.

93. Crassweller, *Perón and the Enigmas of Argentina*, 70. Crassweller states that Perón was able to see the Argentine countryside and there he began forming his opinions of government policies.

94. Ibid., 83–84.

95. Ibid., 85. Crassweller stated that Perón served as a genteel spy throughout 1938 in Chile. Crassweller states it is not clear if Perón knew if the Chilean government knew he was a spy. It is highly ironic that Perón's successor to the intelligence position was Major Eduardo Lonardi, the same man who followed his presidency in 1955.

96. Many historians point out that Perón had a first-hand account of Mussolini's Italy and how the government ran. Mercado stated that it was in Italy that Perón became infatuated with Mussolini's use of radio as a political tool. The problem with Mercado's analysis is the lack of primary or secondary evidence she used to make that claim. Other historians, for instance Sirvén, point to Yankelevich's infatuation with FDR's use of radio and political communities in the 1930s. Again, Sirvén, like Mercado, does not cite any primary or secondary information to substantiate these claims. Other stories that center around Perón and Mussolini

mountain troops. Upon returning, Perón became close friends with another budding officer, General Farrell. Perón's early experiences and friendships gave him leadership skills and important political connections.⁹⁷

By 1943, at the height of World War II, the political state of Argentina was in shambles. President Castillo's policies brought anger and resentment from the armed forces inside Argentina because of his fraudulent election. A young group of officers, called the Group of United Officers (*Grupo de Oficiales Unidos* or GOU), organized around Juan Domingo Perón and General Farrell. Between February and June of 1943, the GOU effectively overthrew the Castillo government.⁹⁸ The newly formed government rejected former neutrality agreements with the United States and pursued general neutrality during the fighting of World War II. Throughout the reorganization of the government, Perón was interested in the position of Secretary of Labor.⁹⁹ In this position, Perón transformed the relationship between unions and government to give himself increasing political visibility.¹⁰⁰ Perón also consolidated political power during this time period by gaining the titles of Secretary of War and Vice President. Perón's political melodrama took shape because of instabilities in Argentine government and Perón's reimagining the political role unions had inside Argentina.

include the story of Perón hearing the Italian leader speak from a balcony and an encounter to interview Mouslini in his personal office. Both of these stories seem very unlikely and could be self aggrandizing.

97. Crassweller, *Perón and the Enigmas of Argentina*, 110–113.

98. The GOU first established General Ramirez in power, until his politics were deemed as unacceptable and the group put Farrell in power by the end of 1943.

99. Perón was at the center of the newly forming government power. Perón's interest in the union leadership position was considered as weak and un-powerful caught others in the struggle for power as curious.

100. The traditional relationship was unions had no voice in the government, thus they did not have to register with the Secretary of Labor. Perón transformed power in the post through officially registering unions with the government. Only official government unions could work inside Argentina. If workers wanted to strike they had to go through Perón, thus giving him incredible political power and access to the growing ranks of union membership.

Eva Duarte was the other central character in Juan Perón's use of the radio. Because of her skills and expertise in radio and her relationship with the populist leader, Eva was an asset. Eva was born in a rural part of Buenos Aires province on May 7, 1919. Eva and her brother were both illegitimate children. Growing up in poverty shaped Eva's worldview and her future goals of becoming famous.¹⁰¹ Eva left her small town when she was seventeen to go to the capital.¹⁰² Once in the big city, Eva found work as an actress in local theaters, before catching the eye of Radio Splendid producer. It was by chance that Eva also attracted the attention of a government official named Oscar Nicolini, who approved her soap opera called "Women of History" for Radio Belgrano.¹⁰³ Eva's show became successful on the radio and her star began to rise in the Argentine skies.¹⁰⁴

It was in January 1944 that Juan Perón's and Eva Duarte's paths crossed during a fundraising drive for victims of the San Juan Earthquake. During the fundraising, Perón became interested in Eva because of her ability to connect to people and her political leanings. In his memoirs, Perón stated that he was interested in a woman to develop labor policies for women and a possible female leader in his movement.¹⁰⁵ Between January 1944 and October 1945, Eva became Juan's mistress, and the two were a well-known power couple in Argentina.¹⁰⁶

101. Fraser and Navarro, *Evita: The Real Life Eva Peron*, 2–27.

102. Stories range on mythologizing Eva's past as she went with a traveling Tango singer. Eva historians Mary Mann and Nicolas Fraiser argue this myth of Eva's past came from her reinvention of herself after she started work in the theaters. The singer Eva purportedly ran off with was in another province at the said time of Eva's entry into Buenos Aires.

103. Nicholas Fraser and Marysa Navarro, *Evita*, 31. Oscar Nicolini would become Perón's first Minister of Communications, probably because of his relationship with Eva Duarte. It should also be noted that in Eva's first *Women of History* program she played Madam Lynch, wife of infamous Paraguayan President Francisco Solano López, the president who started the War of the Triple Alliance.

104. Mary Main, *Evita: The Woman with the Whip* (London: Corgi, 1977), 57–58. Mann notes that Eva made at Radio Belgrano approximately fifteen hundred pesos a month and began to have multiple daily shows.

105. Fraser and Navarro, *Evita: The Real Life Eva Perón*, 41.

106. *Ibid.*, 29–40; Crassweller, *Perón and the Enigmas of Argentina*, 166–180.

Juan Perón and Eva Duarte were both outsiders to the political establishment in Argentina. The military leadership experiences gave Juan a political avenue that he quickly rose to the upper ranks. Eva Duarte used her communication abilities to move from poverty to a major radio star. Both Juan and Eva brought different social connections to the marriage that would be a spring board for their future marriage and political careers.

Radio in 1945

Perón used radio culture and programs to gain a political edge over his opponents. The growth of radio receivers reflects the growth of the Argentine lower and middle classes' consumption and economic power. Argentina had four major networks by the middle of the 1930s. Radio Belgrano, Radio El Mundo, Radio Splendid (R.A.D.E.S.), and LRA Radio Nacional were still the major networks in Argentina by 1945. Most of the Argentine radio networks evolved from newspapers and some remained tied to them. Regulations of radio stations dictated the amount of time for music and news. One United States commentator stated that, "The Argentine government, which is fully cognizant of the news-type programs, has a compulsory broadcast every night at 8:30 which all stations in the Republic are required to carry."¹⁰⁷ Programs were unique on each radio station, and each radio station developed a niche market throughout Argentina.

The Argentine government enforced all the government regulations on amount of time appropriated for live music, styles such as tango and jazz, and transcript approval. Government regulations meant that advertisements were limited due to strict controls and

107. Bernard Jennings McCann, "Argentina Hasn't Jingles That Jangle: Singing Commercial Banned in S.A. Republic," *Broadcasting*, December 2, 1946, 18, American Radio History; *Data and Rates of Radio Stations in the Other American Republics and Puerto Rico*, 17. According to the 1945 U.S. government publication, listening hours were: Morning-12-2pm, Afternoon: 4-5pm, and Night 9-10pm.

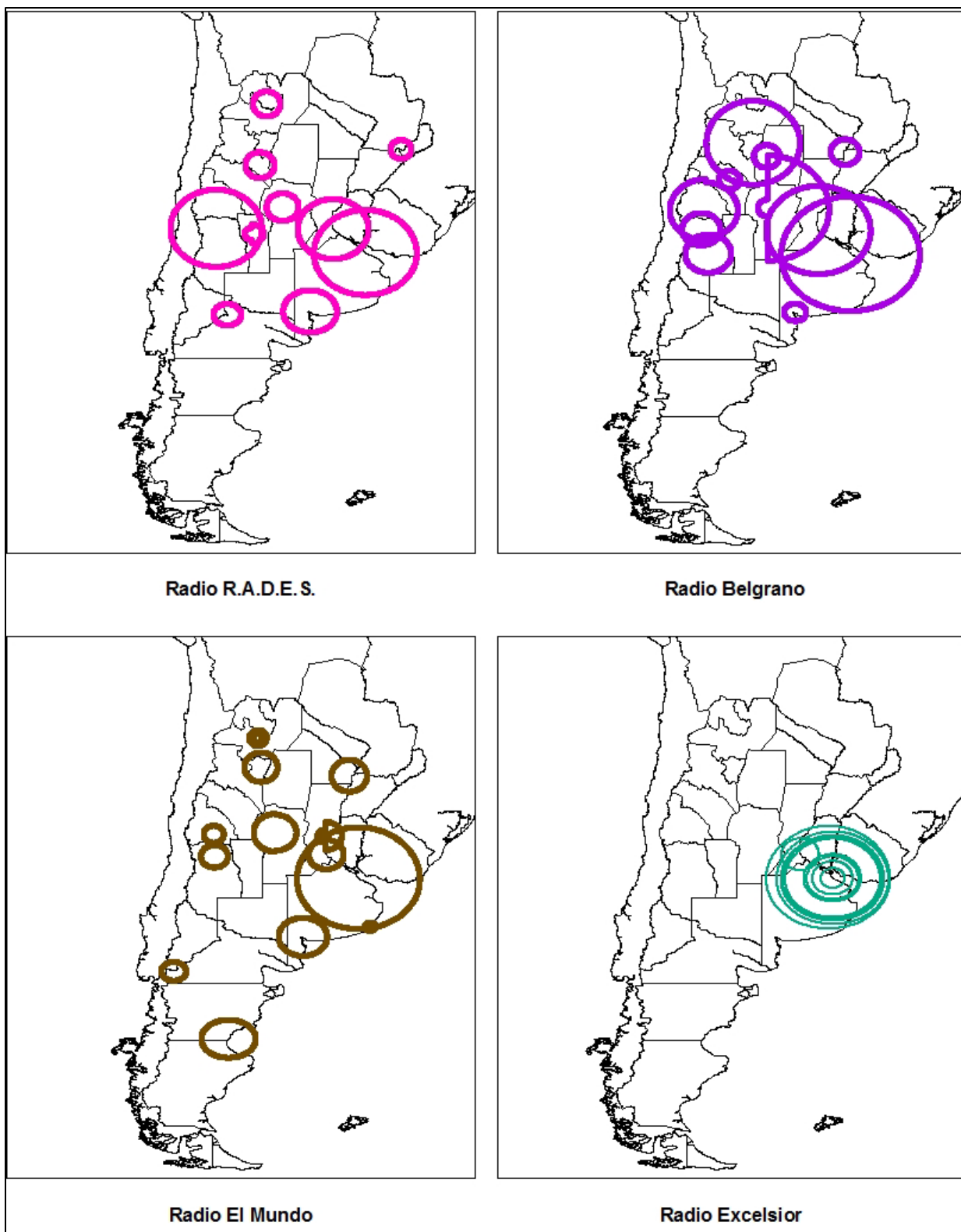


Figure 1. Argentine Radio in 1945

limited use of recorded information.¹⁰⁸ One foreign commentator noted the distinct difference in Argentine radio advertisements, and the lack of music in the advertisement, stating that, “Argentina Hasn’t Jingles that Jangle.”¹⁰⁹

Radio advertisements were generally limited in the number of words, restricted music, and limited by other government regulations. Despite strong government regulations, radio advertisers took to the airwaves to sell products. Many of the radio programs were sponsored by United States companies, like the show *Bajo las Luces de Kolynos (Under the lights of Kolynos)* sponsored by a toothpaste brand that was owned by Colgate. Other US companies such as Coke-a-Cola, Standard Oil, RCA, and Gillette were all major radio sponsors.¹¹⁰ This led one United States commentator to announce that, “Argentine radio is 98% commercial.”¹¹¹ Despite the high number of United States products advertised on Argentine radio, spots by Argentine companies like SIAM carried significant cultural weight for the lower classes. The working classes felt great nationalist pride in purchasing Argentine products over US goods. Transversely, upper class consumers purchased foreign goods because they saw foreign goods as a status symbol.¹¹²

108. Natalia Milanesio, *Workers Go Shopping in Argentina: The Rise of Popular Consumer Culture* (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 2013), 115. The other problem with advertising on the radio was that United States advertising firms believed that Argentina’s high literacy rate meant newspaper advertisements that were more effective.

109. McCann, “Argentina Hasn’t Jingles That Jangle: Singing Commercial Banned in S.A. Republic,” 18. McCann argues that advertisements in Argentina as, “will continue to accept the long-winded, Hodge-podge of words in which stations mix together a half - dozen 10 to 20 -word frases sueltas (short phrases) advertising head- ache cures, laundry soap, chocolate candy, or what have -you. The effectiveness of ‘short phrases’ in Argentina is indisputable, and so far the public has not openly objected to them.”

110. *Ibid.*, 70; Clark, “Argentine Radio Time Is 98% Commercial,” 204.

111. Clark, “Argentine Radio Time Is 98% Commercial,” 204.

112. Milanesio, *Workers Go Shopping in Argentina*, 95. Milanesio goes further to state that one of the SIAM marketing ploys to upper class consumers was, “Argentine but as good as one imported from North America.” Yet this tactic did not work as intended because SIAM was traditionally linked to working class.

Radio Belgrano

Radio Belgrano was the largest of the four networks in 1946. As seen in Figure 1, Radio Belgrano's network was primarily in the Buenos Aires region and the northwestern provinces. The owner and operator of Radio Belgrano was Jaime Yankelevich, who created an empire of radio stations starting in the 1930s. Yankelevich was a true radio innovator, building a media empire from the ground up. Yankelevich's hands-on management style, specifically the way he sought new talent in the interior, was the key factor in the success of Radio Belgrano. Yankelevich traveled to the northwestern provinces to find new talent.¹¹³ The base of operations in the northwestern provinces demonstrated that the network was able to provide entertainment that appealed to both urban and rural settings alike.¹¹⁴

Radio Belgrano's network was the most important in Argentina, both in coverage area and sponsorship. Shows like *Women in History* (*La mujer en historia*) and *The Eternal Lady* (*La eterna dama*) focused on women as the singular subject of shows.¹¹⁵ The advertisements in *La Prensa* from 1945 and 1946 displayed a highly sexualized female. Many of the newspaper ads featuring Eva Duarte were of her face and the power that she had in making the show.¹¹⁶ The effect of this ad campaign was twofold: first, the highly suggestive ad grabbed male attention; and second, it demonstrated that women were gaining social power. The show *Women in History*, starring Eva Duarte, branded Duarte in the audience's mind as an advocate for women. Also, Eva Duarte was given the coveted "prime-

113. The most likely answer why Yankelevich went to the northwestern provinces because the listening base was in that region and he could link the listening base to new talent. People listen more if they could participate in the radio. This is merely an assumption due to lack of evidence on Yankelevich.

114. Claxton, *From Parsifal to Perón*, 32–70; Karush, *Culture of Class*, 96; Chamosa, *The Argentine Folklore Movement*, 135.

115. Shows like *Chispazos de Tradición* demonstrate the hyper-masculine male that was emerging from the same culture. The show put the masculine male at the forefront of popular culture in the 1930s and 1940s. *Chispazos de Tradición*, alongside tangos, that advocated passion, defined masculinity for the early 1940s period.

116. "Radio Belgrano Ad," *La Prensa*, March 17, 1946, University North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

time” program slot, meaning the show was popular and had a large sponsor base.¹¹⁷ Eva Duarte also organized an Argentine Radio Workers Union during her time at Radio Belgrano. The political alignment alliance of Eva Duarte and Peronist political supporters before the presidential election was critical in the 1940s.

Radio El Mundo

Radio El Mundo was the second largest radio network in Argentina at the end of the 1930s.¹¹⁸ Editorial Haynes, a newspaper group, acquired the radio station in the 1930s. Tango music with large orchestras was Radio El Mundo’s specialty. The programs that were on Radio El Mundo in 1945 and 1946 were primarily live radio theater performances that incorporated a live audience or performances that were for family humor.¹¹⁹ The most distinctive feature of the radio network was the British Broadcasting Corporation’s news that was carried throughout the network chain. Radio El Mundo was aimed toward recent European migrants and United States consumption.¹²⁰ The foreign interest pieces on the Radio El Mundo chain catered to an upper class audience and an intrinsic link to newspapers with Radio El Mundo meant that the network had a distinctive flavor and interest in program presentation.

117. Claxton, *From Parsifal to Perón*, 36; “Saga of Eva Perón: 12 Years to Power: Ambitious, Beautiful, Ruthless, She Began in Obscurity and Rose to the Heights,” *New York Times*, July 27, 1952, 56. In 1937 Yankelevich hired Eva for a role in a science fiction drama. She was only eighteen years old at that time, and was paid 180 pesos a month. The average Argentine worker made about 127 pesos a month. Robert Claxton went on to suggest that as Eva encountered important members of the Farrell regime, Yankelevich, “appreciated” her connections. Eva went on to start the Argentine Radio Worker’s Association, a union that advocated for better working conditions for radio employees. Eva’s 1952 New York Times obituary stated that at the same time Perón was organizing unions, Eva was organizing radio unions. There was no clear connection between the two groups.

118. Luna, *Perón y sus tiempo I*; Claxton, *From Parsifal to Perón*, xix. Robert Claxton stated that, “By 1940, 6 radio stations of 38 controlled 54% of funds available for radio.”

119. “MUNDO 1070: UNA RADIO CON HISTORIA. 1935-2005.,” n.d., 38, Biblioteca Congreso Nacional de Argentina.

120. Claxton, *From Parsifal to Perón*, 32. Radio El Mundo was occasionally heard from as far away as New York City. To attract foreign advertisers, Radio El Mundo tried to keep an international flair.

Radio Splendid

Radio Splendid, also known as R.A.D.E.S. (*Red Argentina de Emisoras Splendid*) was the third largest network in Argentina. The network's target audience was the Buenos Aires region and the northwestern corner of Argentina. Listeners considered Radio Splendid as high culture, even though Radio Splendid had programs aimed at children.¹²¹ Though the radio network held similar territory to Radio Belgrano, the range of the towers was not as powerful, thus the affected region was not as large.¹²²

Nightly at 8 pm, Radio Splendid broadcast the program *Boletín desde La Prensa*, a news program that came directly from the newspaper *La Prensa*. The fact that the news program opposed Perón is important. Another program, *Hojeando Diccionario (Browsing Dictionary)* was on during the “prime-time” of 8:30 pm. The link between education, specifically teaching new words to the radio audience, was a critical aspect of the regal character of Radio Splendid.

State Radio

LRA Radio Nacional had been the last radio network in pre-Perón era Argentina. The government-organized radio network was only located in Buenos Aires. LRA Radio Nacional's original purpose was to provide educational programs and provide the Argentine government a media outlet.¹²³ LRA Radio Nacional's mentality was radio as a medium to

121. Ibid., 36–37; Luna, *Perón y sus tiempo I*: 91. Luna went further stating that Editorial Haynes also had roots in the newspaper industry that affected the radio products.

122. *Data and Rates of Radio Stations in the Other American Republics and Puerto Rico*, 5–12. The exact measurements were taken from the results of the Path Loss Distance Formula and data from the United States government document.

123. Noguera, *Radiodifusión en la Argentina*, 158.

teach and incorporate Argentine culture to foreigners.¹²⁴ Radio Nacional played music that was dominated by foreign classical composers (like Bach, Beethoven, and de Falla) as well as the music of Argentine popular and classical composers.¹²⁵ LRA Radio Nacional had a large network reach but had only one radio station.

The other category of Argentine radio was university and municipal radio stations. These stations were generally very small and catered to a niche audience. To highlight Argentina's national theater, Teatro Colon, Radio Municipal broadcast every matinee and evening performance in the winter months.¹²⁶ One of the largest supporters of Radio Municipal was Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales ("State Petroleum Fields" also known as YPF), a government agency that ran the oil fields in Argentina.¹²⁷ The YPF played an increased role as a form of ISI in Perón's administration. Most radio network programs were rebroadcast on these stations. Most literature from the time period rolled the non-commercial radio stations together with the state radio networks.

Radio shows like *Women of History* and *Sparks of Tradition* (*Chispazos de Tradicion*) demonstrate the newly emerging convergence between city and country cultures in Argentina. The emergence of the radio culture in the late 1930s and early 1940s was central to how Perón gained political power through integration of cultures. When Perón stated he was a "caudillo" or "gaucho" both audiences understood what he meant. The radio redefined ideas of hipness, for instance, after Eva Duarte started bleaching her hair, so too did many women throughout Argentina.¹²⁸ The redefinition of cultural values from radio

124. Broadcasts in Italian, Portuguese, German, and Spanish are still a main feature of LRA Radio Nacional today.

125. McCann, "Argentina Hasn't Jingles That Jangle," 70.

126. Ibid., 18.

127. Clark, "Argentine Radio Time Is 98% Commercial," 208.

128. Karush, "Populism, Melodrama, and the Market"; Javier Auyero, *Poor People's Politics: Peronist Survival Networks and the Legacy of Evita* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke, 2001).

personalities and programs demonstrates a new power in Argentina. The previously untapped political potential of radio was ripe for a determined leader to pluck.

Conclusion

The first Act of Perón's political melodrama was setting the Argentine stage with cultural props, diverse radio audiences, and the hero coming into power. The period of 1920 to 1945 demonstrates the power of the radio in the emerging nationalist sentiment in Argentina. Before the turn of the twentieth century, Argentina was a land of dual rural and urban cultures that had different cultural symbols. Radio programs like *Chispazos de Tradición* integrated rural audiences and tango melodrama. Radio was a key medium in the integration of different internal cultural symbols. The radio mass media culture was ripe for Perón's rhetoric that integrated both cultural symbols effectively to create a political power base.

Act II, the hero's disenchantment with politics and desire for change came directly out of Argentine politics from the first Act. The fragmentation of Argentine politics and economics since the turn of the twentieth century was another reason that Perón was politically successful. The massive immigration and industrialization were key factors in Perón's building of political bases. The poor and working classes of the 1930s quickly became political pawns in Perón's rhetoric. *Descamisados* literally means "shirtless one" or "without shirt." In Argentina, in the twentieth century, the term became a pejorative way for elites to describe the lower classes. Perón utilized this term politically to link himself with the lower classes and as a way to thumb his nose at the oligarchy. Political scientist Ernesto Laclau has shown that populism as a political strategy lives and breathes on the leaders

charisma and their ability to connect to people and endear the audience to their beliefs and proposed reforms.¹²⁹ Radio, like grease, lubricated the gears and motors of populism and enabled the chauffeurs of this political strategy to more smoothly drive the Argentine populace and endear the audience to Perón's political programs. Radio waves carried Perón's political messages to a dual class of rural and urban voters that accessed images and language familiar to both groups, giving Perón a clear political advantage.

129. Ernest Laclau, *On Populist Reasons* (London: Verso, 2005), 160.

CHAPTER 2: THE ALUVIÓN ZOOLOGICO: RADIO AND PERÓN BETWEEN 1945-1950

Introduction

On October 9, 1945, the Farrell government arrested Juan Domingo Perón because many feared that he had too much political support from the *descamisados*. Over the next few days, Eva Duarte made every attempt to free Perón through legal channels and contact with labor leaders. On October 16, workers called large strikes throughout Argentina that linked Eva Duarte's message with their political action. By October 17, 1945, as a result of massive social pressure from below, Juan Perón was released from prison. This event shows that through radio, Eva Duarte became the liaison between Juan Perón and the population. On October 23, 1945, Juan and Eva married and thus solidified the link between the radio liaison, Eva Duarte, and political power. This partnership continued over the next few months until his election as president of Argentina.

Perón called the 1946 Argentine presidential election a *Justicialismo* cultural revolution. The radio mass media culture that was emerging in the late 1940s was the basis of the vaguely defined ideology. The radio became the link between Juan Perón's political communication with the population and radio broadcasts that celebrated Argentine culture.

Perón understood the radio's potential and popular culture's political power. Perón stated, "Today will be forever more the glorious epic of the humble, the day of citizenship and of Argentine people not of a part of the people nor of certain groups but of all the truly 'criollo' people. And as good 'criollos,' let us first of all pardon those who betrayed us, those who have betrayed our cause."¹ Perón used the cultural identifier 'criollos' as Argentine people and himself as the leader of this group. The popular radio culture of the 1930s and 1940s was the origin of such rhetoric, a clear example of how Perón used cultural symbols for political identification. Throughout Juan Perón's first administration, a central tenet of his agenda was the expansion of "Argentine culture." The upper class defined culture as Euro-centric, refined, and educated; they thought that the lower working classes did not have any culture, or much political power. One of the most orthodox anti-Peronist phrases of the Peronist Argentina was "Aluvión Zoológico."² Directly translated, this derogatory slang means zoological flood, denoting the rise in the "savage animal" qualities that the upper classes believed exemplified in the lower classes. Anti-Peronists, usually the upper class and the oligarchy, began to employ the phrase on August 7, 1947, to denote the problem of the lower classes now having access to political and economic power.³

The period of 1946 to 1949 witnessed a rise in the economic and political power of the lower classes. Perón saw a way to increase political advantage and exploited this political opportunity to gain power. A method Perón utilized to expand political influence was through the idea of culture. Perón spoke about a vaguely defined *Justicialista* culture that combined elements of working classes, nationalistic images such as tango, rural peasant

1. Mariano Ben Plotkin, *Mañana Es San Perón: A Cultural History of Perón's Argentina.*, 2nd ed. (Wilmington, North Carolina: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2002).

2. Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación*, 132. Sirvén credits Ernesto Sammartino as the originator of the phrase.

3. *Ibid.*, 132.

gaucho imagery, Christianity, capitalism, social justice, and above all Perón as the leader who could link them all together as he advanced Argentina. While it is not clear what Perón meant exactly with *Justicialismo*, what is certain is that he used the idea of culture to advance attacks and gain political support from the lower classes. What Perón came to define as the expansion of Argentine culture, then, was nothing more than the expansion of his own political rhetoric and influence with voters. Early in Perón's first administration, by 1947, he gained complete dominance of radio transmissions. By 1950, Perón advocated for the expansion of Argentine radio and Argentine culture, which was a vague reference to what Perón meant as expansion of his own influence and power inside and outside of Argentina. The radio and culture became synonymous with Perón's expansion of influence throughout Argentina and South America. The purification of the *Justicialista* culture and party came at the end of the 1940s, with the Visca Commission.

Argentine historians agree that Perón effectively used the radio to gain political power, but few have examined the exact mechanics of how radio played a part in Perón's political gains. Perón gained control of all major radio stations and networks in 1947 in Argentina. Through an examination of political actions directed at radio, radio shows, songs, political campaigns, this chapter will argue that radio played an important role in the way Perón expanded his political influence and cultivated the emergence of the "New Argentine" culture.

The 1946 Presidential Election

The 1946 election were on the radio. The political importance of radio to Perón means a critical examination of both the radio stations and the election. On the eve of Perón's

presidential election, there were approximately 1,200,000 radio receivers in Argentina; by 1949, that number had grown to 1,500,000; and by 1955, there were approximately 2,838,000 radio receivers.⁴ The growth of radio receivers reflects the growth of the Argentine lower and middle classes' consumption and economic power. The return to democratic elections after sixteen years under military rule was a dramatic event, one in which radio played a prominent role. The political contenders were Juan Perón for the Labor Party and José Tamborini for the Union Democratic. The political breakdown of the two parties and the radio differed in how both approached the medium effectively. The personal relationship that Perón had with Eva Duarte, who had extensive radio expertise, was one reason that Perón won the election.⁵ Perón, a master demagogue with years of convincing the *descamisados* under his power, instead turned to the radio as the most effective way to sway the masses.

The end of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War dramatically affected the outcome of the 1946 elections. Argentina held British debts from meat sold in World War II and was anxious for the returns. The United States ambassador, Spruille Braden, was a political thorn in Perón's campaign. Braden emphasized the links between Perón and the Nazi-fascists of the time, attacks that drew attention away from Perón's political rhetoric to news about Braden linking Nazis to Perón in many newspapers headlines. Many of the Argentine newspapers, like *La Prensa*, featured key stories about Braden's attacks against

4. Arthur Banks, *Cross-National Time Series, 1815-1973* (Binghamton, New York: Center for Comparative Political Research, 1976). "Brazilians Like Commercials: Advertising in 'Carloads Lots' on 126 of 127," *Broadcasting*, November 18, 1946, 22, American Radio History. Yet, these numbers are very fluid, McCann stated that there were close to 1,500,000 radio sets in Argentina in 1946, while Charles C. Dudley of the J. Walter Thomas Co. stated that Argentina had 1,300,000 in 1946.

5. Eva Duarte's radio celebrity was due from her extensive work on many different radio shows and stations in the 1940s. Her primary success came from her work on Radio Belgrano, but networks like Radio Splendid also used Eva as a primary actress.

Perón.⁶ Fear of post-World War II economic stagnation and political instability was one common issue for voters.

The anti-Peronist candidate José Tamborini had a significant problem of political cohesion. Tamborini's party, the Democratic Union (*Unión Democrática*), was made from a diverse coalition of previous parties in Argentina. The Civic Radical Union (*Union Civica Radical* or UCR) was the traditional political party. The military coup of the 1930s fractured the UCR's political power by forcing the party to move too far to the Left.⁷ The UCR and diverse groups, such as conservatives and Communists, Socialists, Democratic Nationalists, and former UCR members formed the Democratic Union in 1945.⁸ The major problem for the Democratic Union was the political diversity of the party and no cohesion.

A second major problem for the Democratic Union was the lackluster use of the radio by Tamborini. The Democratic Union used the newspapers as the major media outlet for reaching constituents. Newspapers like *La Prensa* ran daily stories about the United States ambassador Braden and his virulent attacks on Perón.⁹ Newspaper stories also linked Perón to fascism, due to Perón's involvement in the Farrell regime's neutral-German stance. The Farrell regime recognized Nazi Germany with a cordial diplomatic relationship until weeks before the fall of Berlin. While the newspaper stories had a legitimate point about the Farrell regime's favoritism towards fascism, the problem was the reception of the story.

6. Eventually, Perón turned the Braden fiasco on its head, when he announced that the election was between “¡Braden o Perón!” Through linking Braden to foreigners to the upper classes, Perón was able to place the rhetoric of Braden inside the context of upper class verses lower class struggle inside the media.

7. Félix Luna, *El 45: crónica de un año decisivo*, Argentinos (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Editorial J. Alvarez, 1969), 28.

8. Rock, *Argentina*, 261.

9. “Memorandum of Conversation: Participants Carl Spaeth and Charles R. Burrows,” United States Government Document (Washington D.C., August 12, 1946), 3, University of Delaware Library. Subsecretary Carl Spaeth stated that Ambassador Braden would use the radio and newspapers to continue his attacks against Perón. “Spaeth believes that the effect of such a signation and of such a public airing of opposing ideological positions would be extremely unfortunate not only for the personal position of certain individuals but also for the prestige of the State Department, both at home and abroad, and he hopes that such a development will not occur.” Yet Braden did not take Spaeth's advice.

Perón masterfully turned the argument away from fascism to Braden’s link with the upper classes. By linking Braden as a foreign nuisance, Perón played the nationalist card and attracted voters with the slogan, “¡Braden o Perón!” Newspaper audiences clearly understood the rhetorical use of pro-fascist images and Perón, yet the Argentine voters thought that newspapers had a foreign, anti-Argentine aspect that did not favor the ground swelling nationalism of 1940s Argentina. Voters identified with the images and ideas from the radio, which meant that radio’s appeal was that it made direct contact with audiences, as opposed to the process of news stories having an intercessor write in a newspaper. This enabled passionate speeches to be felt directly, rather than just read as newspaper headlines processed by writers.

Tamborini’s major reliance on newspapers as a target audience did not play well over the radio. Historian Félix Luna pointed to a speech that Tamborini gave on December 31, 1945, where Tamborini incorporated the traditional “Civilization vs. Barbarianism” narrative. Tamborini’s discourse characterized him as a civilized democrat and Perón as a Nazi barbarian.¹⁰ The problems with Tamborini’s use of the radio were twofold: first, the rhetoric that Tamborini used was not directed at the Argentine nationalist population, thus the rhetoric was disconnected from voters values and needs; second, Luna or any other historian has never noted Tamborini’s effective use of the radio through rousing speeches or charisma. Perón, unlike Tamborini, used Argentine national symbols, spoke rousingly, and focused on voter needs. Tamborini’s language and tone were anachronistic, specifically his language was not current to the lingo of contemporary voters enough to counter Perón. Third, the traditional methodology of newspaper endorsements for Tamborini as the major political supporters was a failure. Tamborini courted the newspaper *La Prensa*, as the main political

10. Luna, *Él 45*, 452–453.

and cultural supporter.¹¹ Another problem with use of newspapers as a vehicle to deliver political messages was that the working classes saw the newspaper as the old, more traditional methodology, while radio was new and exciting. The Tamborini campaign of 1946 demonstrates how important a multi-media approach to reach voters was in Argentina. Tamborini's failure to use the radio effectively was a key reason why he lost to Perón in the presidential election.

Perón's Campaign

Perón's political campaign in 1946 was extremely different from Tamborini's in the use of the radio as the main way to reach voters. On October 9, 1945, Juan Domingo Perón resigned as vice-president and secretary of labor from the Farrell regime. Months earlier the military regime had announced open elections that would allow Perón to run for president. Fearful of his growing power, the military government arrested Perón on October 13, 1945. Union leader and Perón's future vice-presidential candidate, Quijano, took to the radio with the political narrative that Perón left the corrupt government as a means to move towards open elections.¹² The central reason for his imprisonment was that the military regime saw Perón as too charismatic and powerful. The elites and military understood that Perón would disturb the political balance in Argentina. As news of Perón's arrest spread throughout Argentina, unions mobilized to demand his release. Union protesters were more motivated by Quijano's speech than Perón's replacement.¹³ Unions held protests for eight days, from October 9th to 17th.

11. Ibid., 451.

12. Crassweller, *Perón and the Enigmas*, 160.

13. Ibid., 165–167.

One of the political tools at Perón's disposal was Eva Duarte's extensive experience with radio. The radio played the critical link between Perón and popular political action. When Perón resigned from the Farrell government, Eva was immediately removed from the radio in the middle of a program.¹⁴ Eva's absence between October 9 to 17th is uncharacteristic of the actress. Many historians believe that Eva understood how to use the radio effectively.¹⁵ Her radio savvy became a method for political engagement in the Peronist government. The political incarceration of Perón was the catalyst that caused more calls for elections throughout the country from radio listeners.¹⁶

As the mobilization of the population increased, political pressure mounted for the Argentine government to release Perón. The General Confederation of Labor (CGT) was the central union that took Eva's announcements and translated them into action. Led by Cipriano Reyes and Louis Gay, the CGT called for mass protests of union workers on October 17th if Perón were not released. An ocean of people from the countryside, both rural peasants and *descamisados*, congregated in the Plaza de Mayo to demand for Perón's release, both future political bases for Perón. The Farrell regime's fear of Perón gaining political power was quickly becoming a reality.

The political pressure hit a boiling point on October 17, 1945, when Farrell decided to release Perón. By 9:30 in the evening, people began to use their radios to dial in for regular updates.¹⁷ Finally freed, Perón emerged from the Casa Rosada to give a speech directed at the estimated 300,000 demonstrators immediately in front of him in the Plaza de Mayo. Not

14. Ibid., 167; Fraser and Navarro, *Evita: The Real Life Eva Peron*, 48–62.

15. Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo: Raúl Apold, el cerebro oculto que cambió la política argentina*, 82. Silvia Mercado argued that the traditional narrative that Evita advocated Perón to use the radio as the central methodology of Juan Perón's first election was false. Mercado argued that it was Jaime Yankelevich who admired Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 1932 presidential election and saw the potential for Perón to do the same in Argentina.

16. Luna, *Él 45*, 302.

17. Ibid., 348.

only did Perón address his supporters, but also those in their homes throughout the country. Radio was the medium that connected Perón directly to the voting population. Perón stated, “Many times I have attended meetings of workers. I have always felt a great satisfaction: but from today, I feel a great pride in Argentina, because I interpret this collective movement as the rebirth of a consciousness of workers.”¹⁸ Perón connected his political will to the workers, a classic populist rhetorical ploy. Perón placed power in the language of the worker, yet he did not specify whom he was addressing.

The radio transmissions were an osmosis transaction between Perón and the working class voters. Perón masterfully used the medium, yelling into the microphone, demonstrating his passion in support of the people. Perón continued to demonstrate his advocacy of workers, stating, “Many times they told me that the people for whom I sacrificed the hours of my days and nights would finally betray me. May those unworthy frauds know today that this people will not deceive the one who helps them.”¹⁹ Perón painted the picture of himself as a political figure worthy of support and power that would do everything that he could to fight for workers’ rights.

Another way that radio worked positively for Perón was his relationship with radio innovator Jaime Yankelevich. Little is known of Yankelevich’s personal political philosophy. Historians point out that Yankelevich had gained a position within part of the establishment due to his elevated status, thus he was anti-Peronist.²⁰ However, historian Andrea Matallana has argued that Yankelevich was the first Peronist due to his active participation in the

18. Juan Domingo Perón, *Juan D. Perón Plaza de Mayo October 17, 1945 Speech*, MP3 (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1945), Biblioteca del Congreso de la Nación Argentina.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Many historians comment on the fact that Yankelevich was wealthy, thus he had to be anti-Peronist. The problems Yankelevich had with the regulations of Juan Perón. Yankelevich’s worked with the Inter-American Broadcaster’s Association that was against Perón. The central problem is that there is very little archival evidence about Yankelevich to support their claims.

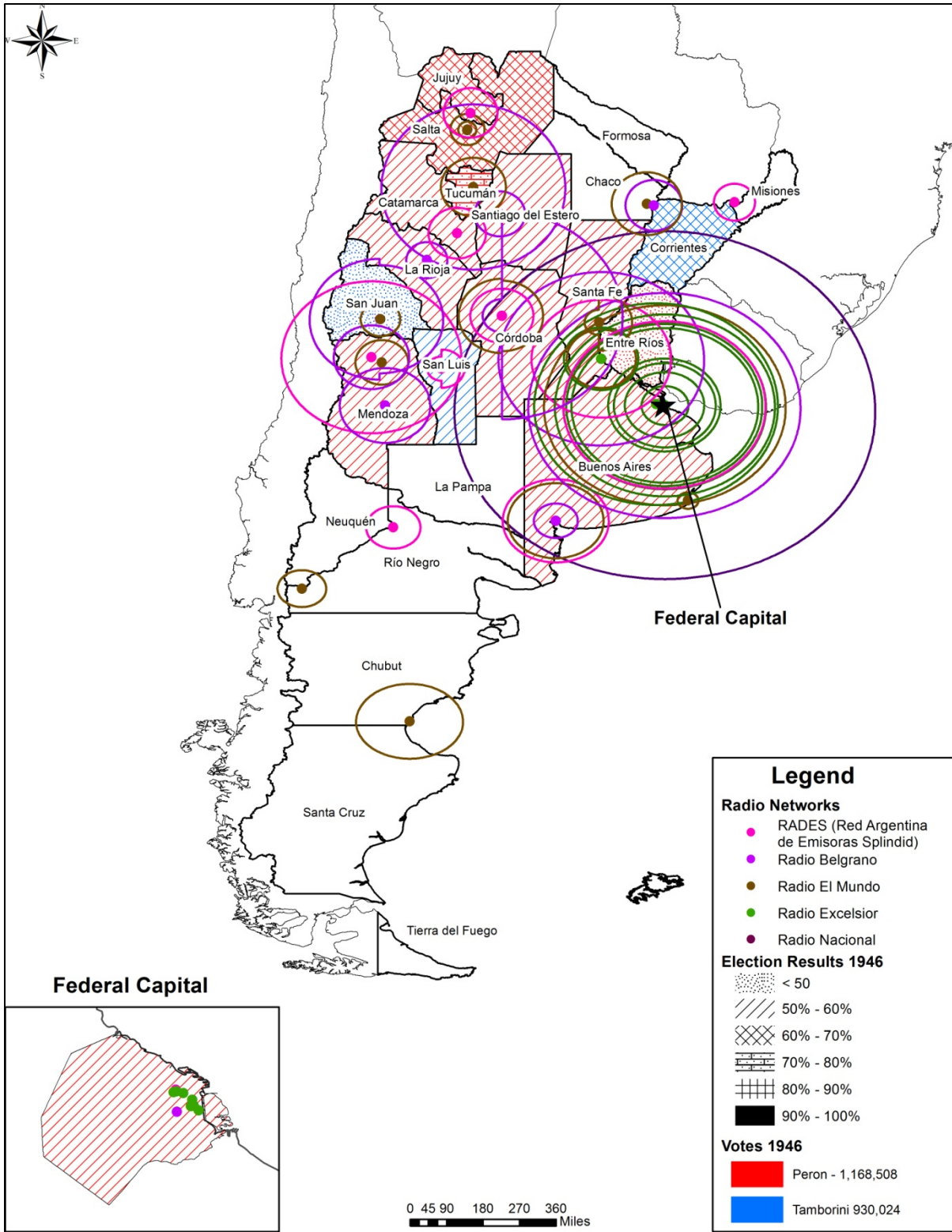


Figure 2. 1946 Election Results and Radio Broadcast Ranges

Farrell regime, and Yankelevich's discovery of Eva Duarte.²¹ While it is unclear the amount of time on his station that Yankelevich allowed Perón for the presidential campaign in 1945 to 1946, Radio Belgrano helped spread a pro-Peronist message.²² What is critical about Yankelevich is not his personal political philosophy but the fact that Yankelevich had close personal ties with both the Farrell regime, when Perón had been vice president, and the working relationship with Eva Perón. Yankelevich's political ties, control of the largest radio network and ability to manage both as political leverage was what made Yankelevich politically important to radio.²³ Yankelevich became an important radio relationship tie to Perón after 1947.

The populism of the Perón campaign focused on the needs of individuals in every political constituency. For example, when speaking to agricultural workers in La Rioja, Perón spoke of developing agriculture and irrigation, or when addressing industrial workers in Buenos Aires he spoke of more rights and vacation time.²⁴ Perón personally addressed and gained favor from each constituent group. The meticulous use of Argentine nationalist language and symbols was particularly helpful in Perón's speeches. Perón frequently used

21. Andrea Matallana, "Inventando La Radio Comercial: Apuntes Para Una Biografía de Jaime Yankelevich," *Revista de Instituciones, Ideas y Mercados* 58, no. May 2013 (May 2013): 150; "SAGA OF EVA PERON," 56. It is interesting to note that it is unclear the exact timeframe that Eva left Radio Belgrano. The New York Times obituary for Eva stated that she was dismissed from Radio Belgrano at the same time Perón was jailed in 1945.

22. Claxton, *From Parsifal to Perón*, 36; Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación*, 128; Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo*, 230. The central problem was a lack of written records is key in how much Radio Belgrano's involvement in the 1946 presidential election. Claxton stated that Yankelevich was reluctant for Perón to use Radio Belgrano for political purposes. Claxton goes on to suggest that the reason for allowing Perón to use Radio Belgrano was the relationship between Eva and Yankelevich. Sirvén offers a different dimension, that Yankelevich had a very friendly relationship with Perón and it was a relationship of mutual respect as the reason for Yankelevich to support Perón's presidential campaign. In Mercado's interpretation, Yankelevich saw the Franklin D. Roosevelt campaign of 1932 and thought that the way Roosevelt used the radio would work in Argentina.

23. Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación*, 96–97, 177–183, ; Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo*, 67–68, 81–82, 147. While Sirvén and Mercado use Yankelevich's name, neither author uses primary sources to legitimize their claim or ideas. Yankelevich's political ideas and thoughts are still unknown.

24. Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo*, 85; Rock, *Argentina*, 254. In La Rioja Perón spoke of "the development of agriculture by irrigation" and declared that "the earth will be delivered to workers who do their part."

the image of the *criollo* and *gaucho* in self-descriptions. The folklore and tango that was present on Argentine radio also helped give Perón a political base on radio, because listeners knew these images and associated Perón with those images.

Perón broke down the classic Argentine political methodology to gain votes of patron-client relationship and the endorsement of newspapers. The traditional historic narrative of Perón's electoral win was that Perón co-opted labor unions early in 1943 to facilitate his rise to power.²⁵ With the labor unions, Perón also gathered political support from the faction within the UCR through the appointment of Juan Hortensio Quijano, a Córdoba lawyer, as a running mate.²⁶ Quijano was a former Yrigoyenist supporter and Perón thought that his addition would bring traditional UCR unionist votes; however, the traditional historical view does not completely answer how Perón won the Argentine presidency.

In discussion of radio and the importance of the 1946 election, historian Félix Luna argued that the radio was the great instrument of Perón used to incorporate city dwellers due to his direct use of language.²⁷ Luna's analysis was inaccurate because of three main factors: first, the cultural language of the radio drew from both the urban and rural sectors, creating a national language; second, the interior was linked together with Perón through Eva Duarte's radio celebrity; and third, because even Buenos Aires did not vote for Perón in a landslide. The meticulous political and cultural crafting of Perón, exemplified by his use of radio broadcast media, was meant to cultivate positive returns.

First, Perón used the radio to augment the traditional personal patron-client relationships that dominated Argentine politics. In his use of the radio to directly speak with individual voters, Perón created new patron-client relationships. Key for Perón to use this

25. Rock, *Argentina*, 257.

26. *Ibid.*, 260.

27. Luna, *Él 45*, 521.

method was the cultural language in which Perón drenched his rhetoric. In the incorporation of the *gaucho* and *criollo* images, the culture of the interior became politically accessible to Perón. An example of Perón's use of *criollo* is in his speech remembering the October 17th release from jail. "... will be forever more the glorious epic of the humble, the day of citizenship and of Argentine people not of a part of the people nor of certain groups but of all the truly 'criollo' people. And as good 'criollos,' let us first of all pardon those who betrayed us, those who have betrayed our cause."²⁸ Perón used the idea that *criollo*'s were a unifying marker of Argentines, not a subgroup within Argentina, while at the same time pointing out that there was an oppositional group. The *gaucho*, became the symbol of the rugged individual in Perón's language. Perón stated, "the *descamisado* recognizes in the *montonero* [a member of a militia led by a *caudillo*], in the *gaucho*, in the rabble, his brothers in suffering and struggle, as men of the New Argentina we are a historical continuity of men who authentically created the nation."²⁹ Again, Perón linked the lower classes to the *gaucho* to say that people living in the interior had links in suffering in the "imagined community" of Argentina.³⁰ In the interior, the use of *gaucho* language and culture gained the trust of the voters, the same methodology that was used by the Padel brothers in Jujuy at the turn of the twentieth century. Perón similarly used the language of the city, found in tango lyrics, to mold a political base in the urban environment.

Second, Perón used Eva Duarte's celebrity to attract voters in the interior.³¹ Figure 2 demonstrates the radio ranges and electoral returns. The provinces of Salta and Jujuy prove

28. Juan Domingo Perón, *The Voice of Perón* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Secretaría de Informaciones de la Presidencia de la Nación Argentina, 1950), 61–62.

29. Michael Goebel, *Argentina's Partisan Past: Nationalism and the Politics of History* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), 89.

30. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*.

31. Luna, *Él 45*, 522.

how important Perón's use of both cultural symbols and Eva Duarte were to his political success. The radio networks available in the two provinces were Radio Belgrano and Radio El Mundo. The Radio El Mundo network did not reach as much of the Salta and Jujuy provinces as the Radio Belgrano station. The programs were the important factor. On Radio Belgrano, Eva Duarte's nightly appearances linked Eva and Perón together in the listener's minds.³² Eva Duarte was a conduit for Juan Perón. Listeners transferred their favor of Eva to Juan Perón. The positive influence of Eva Duarte in Salta and Jujuy shows how the personal relationships of radio helped Perón politically.

The power of Eva Duarte to connect to listeners is demonstrated in the absence of Radio Belgrano in the province of San Juan. The owners of radio station LV5 were a local winemaking family, the Graffigna.³³ The independence of the radio station was important to the political outcome of San Juan province because the station was mostly independent and relayed Radio El Mundo's programs. The two major networks that had programs in the San Juan province were Radio El Mundo and Radio Splendid. Thus, the lack of Eva Duarte's presence in San Juan was another factor in why the province did not vote in favor of Perón. There was no intermediary to link Perón's policies to voters. In addition, the province had no influence of Radio Belgrano where the cultural link between Perón and Eva Duarte connected voters and radio listeners.

The strength of the local economy, development, education, literacy, local cultural, and political leanings are all factors that came into electoral play. While the radio might seem

32. Claxton, *From Parsifal to Perón*, 149. Although it is nearly impossible to extract the exact number of radios in the two northern provinces during the 1946 election we can make educated guesses. Robert Claxton stated that there were approximately "30,000 radios in 1934 in Salta, Jujuy, Tucuman, Catamarca, and Los Andes." The total number Claxton gave was 1,200,200 in Argentina. Assuming that the 30,000 radio receivers in 1934 doubled as the radio receivers in Argentina from 1934 to 1944 doubled, that means that there were 60,000 radio receivers in the northwestern provinces.

33. Luna, *Perón y sus tiempo* 1st:92. Luna goes on to state that after Perón acquired power and took over radio stations, the LV5 stayed in the hands of the powerful Gaffigna family.

to have wielded positive Peronist influence, there are several other factors to consider. The Federal Capital, is one example of how the media played a factor between voters and radio. The city of Buenos Aires was the heart of Perón's campaign. This economically-developed city, with a large industrial base and unions that were headquartered in the city were favorable factors for Perón in 1946; however, Perón won the district with only fifty-three percent of the vote.³⁴ Why did the Federal Capital come so close in vote totals? Perón won because the more diverse the radio media market was, the more equal the vote became between Perón and Tamborini. Historian Robert Claxton has argued that the radio was a method of democracy: specifically, the more radio stations there were, the more democratic the society was.³⁵ There were twenty radio stations in the Federal Capital, and the media domination by Perón lessened.³⁶ The more coverage gave listeners diversity in culture and perspectives. Thus, Perón and Eva's radio celebrity brought more election returns.

Radio Nacional and the Rise of State Regulations to Control the Radio

Perón was a pragmatic leader and saw the need to expand his government's political and cultural control. Before the next election, Perón extended suffrage to women throughout the country's provinces and expanded LRA Radio Nacional to keep a political edge. The radio linked the populist leader to the population and replaced original political constructions of patron-client relationships. Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate that, at the time, radio reached only to the central regions of Argentina. Perón saw a chance to expand his political fortunes

34. "Como Voto la Capital," *La Nacion*, February 28, 1945, Biblioteca del Congreso de la Nación Argentina.

35. Claxton, *From Parsifal to Perón*, xii.

36. *Ibid.*, 32–70; "Las Elecciones Presidenciales en la Pais," 10; *Data and Rates of Radio Stations*, 5–12.

by extending radio stations throughout the countryside. LRA Radio Nacional was the only radio network that was directly under state control, thus subject to expansion by Perón.

Before expansion of LRA Radio Nacional, Perón needed to unify radio content. To do this, he issued an Official Bulletin in the Instruction Manual of Broadcasting on May 28, 1947. Radio historian Carlos Ulanovsky argued that the Official Bulletin tightened existing radio regulations to a standard of sixty-five percent musical and thirty-five percent spoken words.³⁷ The three hundred and seven rules curtailed the types of music played, the duration, language spoken, and the regulation of foreign influences.³⁸ The goal of the Official Bulletin was to gather complete control of radio content.

The Official Bulletin was the first wave of radio regulations passed by the state in 1946. The second major radio regulatory set was the Servicio Oficial de Radiodifusión (SOR). The purpose of the SOR was to have an official public administration organized under the Secretary of Communications, an individual who was responsible for radio, declaring private licenses obsolete, and the integration of the three major broadcast networks.³⁹ The expansion of LRA Radio Nacional was a central part of the SOR's duty. The original LRA Radio Nacional was only a small station in the city of Buenos Aires. LRA Radio Nacional incorporated previous government and local radio stations to expand outward into other media.

37. Ulanovsky, *La Radio Nacional*, 37; Clark, "Argentine Radio Time Is 98% Commercial," 204. Other regulations include: 100 words of advertising may be aired for every 3 minutes of music or every 5 minutes of spoken program; if those 100 words all treat of one product, the product may be mentioned only four times, no more than 10 products may be advertised in any given burst of 100 words; in non-musical shows, there may be only one 100-word commercial in a 12-minute show (in addition to opening and closing), two in a 15-minute script, 3 in 20 minutes, 4 in 25 minutes, 5 in a full half-hour program; serials come in for another bit of special treatment: networks are forbidden to present more than two daily—though individual stations, including those with network affiliations, may devote up to 30% of their daily air time to that type of program; and a continued story may have no more than 26 chapters—a 30-day month less four days—by Government order.

38. Ulanovsky *et al.*, *Días de Radio*, 154.

39. Ulanovsky, *La Radio Nacional*, 51; Noguer, *Radiodifusión en la Argentina*, 156.

LRA Radio Nacional became one of the most useful tools that the government had available to influence public opinion in Argentina. The Peronist government used LRA Radio Nacional as a bully pulpit for Perón to attack enemies within and outside of Argentina. For example, on July 19, 1948, the Secretary of Information, Emilio D. Cipolletti, transmitted a message that there was a United States plot against Argentina in the up-coming elections for the Inter American Broadcasters Association. The plot spoke specifically of “United States’ trusts” and “a ploy by United States Capitalist monopoly.”⁴⁰ The approach by Perón towards LRA was to remove the power of the newspapers and have an official stream of media led by the national radio network without other powers involved. Between May and September of 1947, Perón used LRA Radio Nacional to condemn the socialist newspaper *La Vanguardia* for reproducing criticisms of Eva’s travel expenses.⁴¹ LRA Radio Nacional also became a major news source for Argentines. The network regularly re-broadcast speeches and recorded news stories.

Perón’s design to control all LRA Radio Nacional’s content had direct parallels to his political policies. Classical music, the two hundred and fifty original lectures and debates organized annually by the station, and the radio dramas were central themes of LRA Radio Nacional’s broadcasts. As the station gained intellectual momentum, the content expanded to include radio programs led by philologists, historians, librarians, and agriculturalists.⁴² The importance of LRA Radio Nacional’s content was that these professions were all examples of how Perón intended to expand Argentine culture. LRA Radio Nacional, through the SOR,

40. *Secretaría de Información discurso radial a la Argentina 19-7-1948* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Secretaría de Información de Argentina, July 19, 1948), Archivo General de Nación.

41. Luna, *Perón y sus tiempo* 1st:85.

42. Ulanovsky, *La Radio Nacional*, 38.

was the first extension of two key principles for Peron: first, the consolidation and regulation of the radio landscape; second was cultural expansion via radio.

The First Five Year Plan

The year 1946 was the height of Perón's political and cultural power because he had recently won the presidential election due to his success with radio. Perón's support came from the union sectors that had received favorable treatment from his government, thus gaining future potential voters due to economic success that translated into more purchases of radio receivers. Promises directed at unions, such as minimum wage, vacations, and social programs, were political props that Perón gave to trade unions that favored him. The major policy goals of Perón in 1946 were to protect the urban employment manufacturing sectors and consolidate personal control of the labor unions.⁴³

Perón designed the First Five Year plan around his needs to protect the political base of the unions and his attempt to modernize Argentina.⁴⁴ Central to the plan was the idea of spreading *Justicialismo* culture. Perón used the term "culture" loosely in rhetoric, mostly to define an expansion of his personal political power and influence in Argentina. Through the manipulation of rhetoric aimed at giving agency to the under classes, the leader fostered the idea that he was advocating the increase in working class culture throughout Argentina. In reality, Perón was interested in expansion of political power, and putting the name *Justicialismo* before culture enabled Perón to control the political movement. The use of

43. Rock, *Argentina*, 267.

44. A.N.O, "Argentina's Economic Outlook: The Five Year Plan," *The World Today* 3, no. 9 (September 1947): 407. "Five-Year Plan," *Time*, October 14, 1946. The United States press had interesting perspectives on the First Five Year Plan. Time Magazine stated that the project was to be a series of bills that was to tackle Argentine economic problems. The interesting aspect of the article was the publication of a week before the official roll out of the plan. The publication, *The World Today*, focused on the economic development of Argentina and went into detail about the level of national economic proposals.

radio as a means to spread the *Justicialismo* culture was Perón's manner of increasing influence inside and outside Argentina.

The power of the rhetoric of *Justicialismo*'s version of culture was important to the expansion of Perón's power throughout the 1940s and 1950s because he wanted to expand radio and political control in Argentina. Why, then, did Perón feel the need to expand his vision of culture? To Perón, the expansion of official Argentine culture, a re-education of the population for political incorporation into his political populist movement, equated with his expansion of power.⁴⁵ Early in Argentine radio history, the radio had been a tool of education, so Perón latched onto the idea that radio could re-educate the listener into his political persuasion. Perón stated at the unveiling of the First Five Year Plan, "Our aim, as regards to this important aspect of our national life, is to intensify the knowledge of our people in our national culture, preserving and increasing it. To this end, the Executive Power studies the necessity of forming a culture and preserving it."⁴⁶ Perón went on to incorporate his vision of culture as, "the integral promotion of our culture, basis and scientific centers, by the dissemination of lectures and broadcasts, and centers of scientific research of literacy, historical, philosophical, ideological, artistic, and philological investigation."⁴⁷ The expansion of culture in the leader's perspective meant the expansion of the Peronist version of culture. The rise of Perón's power was due to the use of dual upper and lower class cultures that existed in both the urban and rural sectors. Because the upper class thought that the lower classes were not cultured, Perón turned the traditional cultural thoughts on its head.

45. Plotkin, *Manaña Es San Perón*. Mariano Ben Plotkin argued the link between control of Argentine society and Peronism was through rituals. One of the largest rituals was the annual October 17th celebration of Perón's release from jail. One of the biggest aspects of the October 17th celebration was Perón gave speeches on the radio. The radio played a large part in the methodology of ritual, education, Peronism, and the link between the rural and urban sectors in Argentina.

46. Perón, *The Voice of Perón*, 172. In the Peronist propaganda book the passage was found under the section titled "Cultural reform."

47. *Ibid.*

He advocated that there *was* a culture of the working classes and that culture should spread throughout Argentina. “I firmly believe that culture determines the happiness of peoples, because culture should mean not only moral preparation and a weapon to defend each man’s position in the daily struggle, but also an indispensable instrument to enable political life to evolve with tolerance, honesty, and comprehension.”⁴⁸ *Justicialismo* Culture, in Perón’s view, was a weapon to fight for the lower classes’s beliefs and ways of life. Perón’s idea of cultural expansion was nothing more than an expansion of his own political power.

One of the central questions of the 1940s was how powerfully did radio saturate into the masses? While the coverage area looks convincing as evidence of correlation, there can never be any level of quantifiable data to measure the radio’s effects on political returns. The question then is to look at other ways that radio culture affected the larger, non-listening Argentine society.

The first way that radio made a difference in Argentine society was in gender representations, both on the radio and radio spot advertisements in newspapers, and the *Justicialismo* culture Perón advocated.⁴⁹ After 1947, advertisements for radio shows in newspapers depicted two types of women: either the highly sexualized female with exaggerated features or the wise grandmother.⁵⁰ In advertisements for dramatic serial shows, women were generally depicted in the middle of a group of men, to demonstrate the heroine’s torrid relationships between suitors. Shows that focused on family or social qualities depicted women as the loving *abuela*, or grandmother in newspaper advertisements.

48. Juan Domingo Perón, *The Peronist Doctrine*, ed. Peronista Party (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1952), 357. The section came from a speech given in Dec. 15, 1947.

49. Taken from samples from the newspaper *La Prensa* between 1947 to 1949.

50. Milanese, *Workers Go Shopping in Argentina*, 115. Milanese demonstrates that Argentine advertisers were influenced by United States advertising firms and used similar sexualized images of women in ad campaigns.

The characterization of women in radio advertisements demonstrates the duality of Perón's relationship to women. On the one hand, he gave women the right to vote; yet, on the other hand, radio advertisements characterized women either as the grandmother figure or images of seduction. Eva Duarte walked the fine line between motherly figure through her charitable works and seductress—in glamour images—throughout Perón's presidency as well. Radio was the focal point of the *Justicialismo* culture, yet women still were reduced to two dimensional images, counterpoint to the growing economic and political influence women achieved under Perón's presidency.

The First Five Year Plan and the SOR encapsulated how Perón integrated radio and culture. To support the president, the LRA Radio Nacional integrated what Perón identified as the sources of culture into its live broadcasts. LRA Radio Nacional was the means by which the government connected the population to the state's new culture. Historian Félix Luna has argued that the First Five Year Plan was one of the most exploited propaganda themes of the Peronist government.⁵¹ Also critical to the expansion of the new Peronist radio mass media culture was Eva Duarte, who became a prominent figure on LRA Radio Nacional.⁵² LRA Radio Nacional, then, encapsulated the state control of the expansion of Argentine radio, an organic starting point for expansion of the *Justicialismo* culture that was the basis of Perón's political power, and incorporated radio relationships that gave Perón actual political power.

51. Luna, *Perón y sus tiempo Ist*:265.

52. Karush, *Culture of Class*, 187. Eva's radio power went beyond LRA Radio Nacional. Karusch argued that by October 1946, there was a black list of outspoken radio talents who were anti-Peronist and who had personally offended Eva Perón.

1947: State Take Over of Radio

The second year of Perón's term was politically important to the leader and the first lady. Perón nationalized foreign investment throughout Argentina in 1947.⁵³ Eva's political power grew during that same year. Eva was central in the campaign for women's political rights and the women's suffrage campaign of 1947.⁵⁴ The extension of suffrage to women was a key reform for Argentina. The shows on the radio, like *Women in History*, political campaigns, general press, and charity brought women to the Peronist platform. Even Eva's language, focused on love, home, and hearth, incorporated women's identity into Peronism. In 1946, the state took over a social charity called the *Fuerza Vivas Sociedad de Beneficiencia* and gave control to Eva.⁵⁵ Through charity work, Eva expanded her political visibility and also extended the patron-client relationship to those who did not have access to the radio. The political calculation of expansion of women's suffrage, spearheaded by Eva's effort, was a pragmatic move to expand Perón's base.⁵⁶

Argentine cultural historian Matthew B. Karusch has argued that under Perón, the Argentine zeitgeist became static.⁵⁷ Perón's political rise in power came from the manipulation of 1930s and 1940s radio culture, thus Perón believed that control of radio content was necessary to remain in power. State control of radio was central to maintain the

53. Rock, *Argentina*, 278.

54. *Ibid.*, 287.

55. *Ibid.*

56. Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo*, 108. By late 1947 Perón began to take over newspapers. The Socialist La Vanguardia was the first newspaper that the state took over. The key player in the media takeover was Raul A. Apold, who in March 1947 the leader promoted to secretary of communication. Apold was an expert journalist who understood how culture and propaganda went hand in hand. Perón co-opted the traditional methods of Argentine political endorsements through the control of newspapers. Apold was the main figure that incorporated or used printed media in the government. Perón incorporated almost twenty newspaper and news agencies and gave control over them to Apold in 1947. Apold understood the cultural implications of newspapers and helped craft the state narrative of culture and media together during his tenure as Secretary of Communication.

57. Karush, *Culture of Class*, 215–224.

static Argentine culture. The start of the Peronist government's direct ownership of the media began in 1947 with an explosion in Radio Libertad and ended with the takeover of Radio Belgrano and the other three private radio networks in Argentina.

Bombing of Radio Libertad

On the night of February 19, 1947, a group of five young men stole a rental car, took off the plates, and went to the headquarters of Radio Libertad. The five young men were armed with .45 caliber pistols and carbine machine guns and also carried a bomb. The three men proceeded to kill three workers at the station before planting their bomb in broadcast studio B. At approximately 8:30pm, the bomb went off, destroying most of the building that housed Radio Libertad and damaging several surrounding buildings. The young men targeted the broadcaster and commercial transmitter.⁵⁸ The central question is why did these young men target a radio station?

Radio Libertad was an early commercial station that was also known as Radio Mitre.⁵⁹ The radio station was owned in the 1930s by the newspaper *La Nación* and targeted the Buenos Aires audience.⁶⁰ Audiences knew Radio Libertad for broadcasts of soccer games on the network.⁶¹ Considering the radio station's apolitical content, there is little reason why the radio station would have been targeted; however, Radio Libertad was a small radio

58. "Estalló una Bomba en el Local de Radio Libertad," *La Prensa*, February 20, 1947, 1st edition, 6, University North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

59. Claxton, *From Parsifal to Perón*, 66–67; Noguera, *Radiodifusión en la Argentina*, 336. The status of this station is quite shaky to specify the exact historical name to denote the station, Claxton stated that Radio Mitre became a part of the LRA Radio Nacional organization in 1937. The problem with the lack of evidence makes it hard to identify who exactly owned the radio station. In Noguera's index of radio stations in 1983, he listed Radio Mitre's ownership as LRA 6.

60. Clark, "Argentine Radio Time Is 98% Commercial," 208. In many of the documents about radio stations and networks in Argentina, they list Radio Mitre as part of the Radio Excelsior was network. Clark mentions that the Radio Excelsior known to be a favorite of the British who lived in Argentina.

61. *Ibid.*; Claxton, *From Parsifal to Perón*, 21.

station that could be used as an example, as a way to warn other stations not to test the government.

The attack on Radio Libertad was a professional job. The young men were skilled in evading authorities, weapon skills, and placement of the bomb for the most devastation. While there is no official link between this attack and Perón, the fact that it occurred early in 1947, coupled with the expansion of radio regulations to consolidate radio station points towards Perón as the originator. If the attack was ordered by Perón, then the bombing would have sent a message to other radio stations to knuckle under or face the consequences. Also, the fact that there were no news stories or official reports, the next day demonstrated the fact that the bombing was suspicious and swept under the rug.

Radio Belgrano and Peronist State Take Over

The SOR and First Five Year Plan placed a high value on radio and the propaganda of *Justicialismo* culture under Perón. Commercial stations were independent yet were under the regulatory thumb of the Peronist government in the beginning of 1947. The commercial broadcasters had complete control of content. Perón saw the need to control radio completely to ensure content and political stability. The first target was Radio Belgrano, under the control of Jaime Yankelevich.

In 1946, Yankelevich made a long speech against the regulations of the Official Bulletin.⁶² At the anniversary of Radio Belgrano, Yankelevich gave a speech that praised the expansion of Argentine radio. Yankelevich commented on the current legal procedures of the Peronist government, “The legal regime of the broadcastings conspired against the realization of many important initiatives. Precarious concessions prevent us from a monumental building

62. Ulanovsky et al., *Días de Radio*, 155.

construction and all technical aspects: one to two thousand people radio audience, large concert halls and recording, radio electronic file in Argentina.”⁶³ In 1947, Yankelevich was still not happy with Peron’s legal codes for radio. One year later, Yankelevich still saw the radio content stagnant with no major innovations or types of programs in production.⁶⁴ Yankelevich directed his criticism towards the Peronist government.

On June 5, 1947, a chance came for Perón to regulate radio further. Perón gave a speech that launched Eva on her trip to Europe. Radio Belgrano carried the speech live. Over the Belgrano network, a male voice broke in and stated, “Do not believe Peron. All he does is lie.”⁶⁵ People listening to Radio Belgrano heard the voice. The importance of the male voice was that Perón was at the height of his political and cultural influence in 1947, and that the voice directly contradicted Perón in a live broadcast. Today there is still no definite proof of who interrupted Perón.⁶⁶ The illegal interruption however, was exactly the excuse Perón needed to start to consolidate commercial radio networks.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid., 160.

65. Luna, *Perón y sus tiempo* 1st:92; Noguier, *Radiodifusión en la Argentina*, 57; Ulanovsky et al., *Días de Radio*; Karush, *Culture of Class*, 185; Crassweller, *Perón and the Enigmas*; Rock, *Argentina; Radio Belgrano (LRY)*, Daily Report: Briefs (Washington D.C.: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, June 9, 1947), A3, Foreign Broadcast Information Service; Milton Bracker, “Peron’s ‘Freedom’ Angers Radio Men: Resolution Drafted to Protest the ‘Comedy of Argentine Liberty of Air Waves,” *New York Times*, July 9, 1948, 4. The secondary historiography is not exactly clear on the statement made over the radio. Luna stated that the male voice interrupted and said, “No le crean, son todas mentiras.” Jorge Noguier recounts the fall of Radio Belgrano, but does not specifically state what was said over the air. Ulanovsky used Luna’s quote. Karusch stated the transmission was, “Don’t believe anything he says, it is all lies.” Both Crasswellwer and Rock are unusually silent on this pivotal event in both radio and the regime. It is interesting that the anti-Peronist newspaper *La Prensa* did not mention the controversy at all in the month of June or July. It would be expected that the anti-Peronist newspaper would be interested in scoring any points against the government and also supporting a supposed anti-Peronist Yankelevich. The United States Foreign Broadcasters reported three days later that the announcement was “Death to Perón.” *The New York Times* a year later ran a piece about the problems of the Peronist government and freedom of airwave liberty. The article sites the June 5, 1947 comment and states the message was, “Death to Perón!”

66. Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo*, 147. Mercado believed that the interference was from Yankelevich who climbed a telephone pole in Hurlingham to cause interference and undermine Perón. In 1953 a United States Foreign Broadcast service stated that the Federal Police had arrested Luis Benino Legizamon and Marcos Orviety. The two men created an amplifier that allowed Legízamon to interrupt the broadcast. The article further states that the two men were socialists, and tied to terrorism.

Immediately after the interruption on Radio Belgrano, Perón's government began to consolidate the Radio Belgrano networks and to nationalize them. Perón suspended Radio Belgrano's license for "an indefinite period" with Broadcasting order No. 3222.⁶⁷ While Perón attempted to come up with a solution to the Radio Belgrano problem, radio workers presented another force.

The workers of Radio Belgrano were the most affected by the closure of radio stations. Just days after the shutdown of Radio Belgrano, on June 18, 1947, the station workers looked for a solution to the economic problems that the shutdown caused them. An organized group of two hundred workers from Radio Belgrano officially "complained" to the Peronist government about how the suspension resulted in hardships.⁶⁸ The fact that Radio Belgrano workers took to the Peronist government to lobby for work and rights, a central tenet of Perón's political campaign, is very interesting. Radio Belgrano played a role in the election of Perón, through radio spots, thus the workers at Radio Belgrano would certainly have known Perón's pro-worker rhetoric. The workers used their unemployment as a political tool to force Perón's hand to make a decision on reopening Radio Belgrano.⁶⁹ For Perón, the problem was that the government did not have a good resolution in June for the

67. Matallana, "Inventando La Radio Comercial," 162; Ulanovsky et al., *Días de Radio*, 158.

68. *Workers of Radio Belgrano Complain*, Daily Report: Latin American Section References to Argentine Affairs (Washington D.C.: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, June 19, 1947), A3, Foreign Broadcast Information Service. It is interesting to note that the United States gained this information not from an Argentine source, but from a Uruguayan radio station. While the article was not clear on the organization of these workers, one would suspect the involvement of Eva's group Argentine Radio Worker's Union. The lack of documentation does not make it clear the involvement of the union. Also based on the number of actors, managers, technicians, broadcasters, and executives that worked at Radio Belgrano does not equal two hundred. It is not clear if other workers from stations within the network chain contributed to the strike/complaint.

69. Peter Winn, *Weavers of Revolution: The Yarur Workers and Chile's Road to Socialism* (New York: Oxford, 1986). It is interesting that other populist leaders had similar problems with rhetoric and workers. Peter Winn analyzed the Allende regime in Chile in the 1970s. In Chile, Allende promised to nationalize factories, yet due to economic pressure moved slowly towards this goal. The workers in some textiles revolted and took over the factories, forcing Allende's hand.

workers to return to work.⁷⁰ Within a month of Radio Belgrano's shut down, it reopened. The worker's strike demonstrates two key points: first, Perón was not ready for all the consequences of what he had done with radio stations; second, while the political decisions were made at the top, the workers were affecting the decisions from below. The Radio Belgrano "complaint" affected more than just the Radio Belgrano network.

For a little over a month, the network Radio Belgrano was silent. On July 2, 1947, Radio Belgrano returned to the airwaves with Resolution No. 3854.⁷¹ What the Peronist administration gave, however, they quickly took away. The SOR, the Argentine government's radio regulating arm, shut down three stations that belonged to Radio Belgrano network, and no official reason was given why these three had been chosen.⁷² Taking away stations from the Radio Belgrano network was another way to emphasize the power of the Peronist government's will against the people. The dialectic between the Argentine government, Radio Belgrano, and radio workers demonstrates Peronist lack of clear administrative plans to control and integrate radio stations into the government.⁷³

70. There are three groups that each had their own political agenda in the "complaint," Perón, Yankelevich, and the workers. Perón's agenda was very clear, to end the "complaint" and reprimand Yankelevich. Yankelevich, on the other hand, was interested in returning to the radio as quickly as possible. The third group, the workers are the very volatile element because of lack of documentation. There are three different objectives that they were looking for: first, they could have been genuinely interested in returning to work and getting their income; second, they could have been loyal to Yankelevich and understood how the political problem looked to the world as a way to exploit Perón's political rhetoric; third, the fact that many of the workers were pro-Peronists and they saw an opening for Perón to nationalize and give more rights and wages to them. The lack of documents only leads this to speculation. The most plausible reason, without evidence, is the workers were interested in their own economic problems and were advocating a return to work.

71. Ulanovsky et al., *Días de Radio*, 155–156; *Workers of Radio Belgrano Complain*, A3; "SUSPENSION OF RADIO BELGRANO LIFTED," *LRA/LRX Buenos Aires*, July 2, 1947, A1.

72. Ulanovsky et al., *Días de Radio*, 158–160.

73. Some of the historiography makes it appear as if Perón was following a Hitler/Mousolini type of Fascist control of the radio and planned to take over radio. Others point to Eva Duarte as the central culprit of knowing who to attack and why to bring radio into Peronist hands. The back and forth between these three groups and the Peronist government's desire to incorporate radio demonstrates the lack of a cohesive plan bring this form of mass media into the government's hands.

On August 18, 1947, Yankelevich went to Oscar L. Nicolini, the General Administrator of Posts and Telecommunications, and offered to sell Radio Belgrano for six million pesos.⁷⁴ The Peronist government bought the Radio Belgrano networks from Yankelevich, and Perón gave ownership to Eva Perón.⁷⁵ In a confidential note dated September 11, 1947, Nicolini stated that the estimated value of Radio Belgrano was fifteen million pesos.⁷⁶ Yankelevich sold Radio Belgrano for a loss of nine million pesos. There is no clear reason why Yankelevich decided to sell the radio network for such a high loss. One explanation might be that Yankelevich was unhappy with Argentine radio and dissatisfied with the Peronist government, as evidenced from Yankelevich's statements the previous year. The sale of Radio Belgrano to Eva probably helped Yankelevich because he knew that Eva understood how to run radio effectively. Eva, then, was a central figure, not only because she was associated with the radio, but also because of her relationship with Yankelevich.

The acquisition of Radio Belgrano by Perón was a brilliant tactic for two reasons. First, Nicolini stated that the acquisition of Radio Belgrano would fulfill an urgent need for the “basic reasons of the concept of national spiritual defense.”⁷⁷ The “national spiritual defense” concept referred to Perón's idea of culture and its relationship to the state. It also refers to the expansion of radio news, which took away political primacy from newspapers

74. Noguera, *Radiodifusión en la Argentina*, 65. The exact amount is not clearly described in primary sources.

75. Ulanovsky et al., *Días de Radio*, 161. Luna, *Perón y sus tiempos* 1st:92–93. There are few answers to why Perón gave the radio stations back to Yankelevich or Yankelevich's motivations in selling the radio stations. Luna pointed out that Yankelevich gladly accepted the money, and returned six years later to start the first TV station in Argentina. Ulanovsky does not offer any reasons for either side. Nor does Noguera. Karusch does not offer any solutions to either question. Perón could have easily taken over the radio station and kept Radio Belgrano working as a state entity. I think the reason that Perón did not keep the radio station was for two reasons: first, Perón attempted to find a way to keep the station but did not have the technical expertise or the legal methods pulled together; second, LRA Radio Nacional was tied with Eva very closely, and the fear of cross-branding of the two radio stations might confuse the listeners with Perón's cultural message.

76. Noguera, *Radiodifusión en la Argentina*, 59.

77. *Ibid.*, 162.

since the radio could spin news stories with their own bias. The acquisition of Radio Belgrano was another link between culture and state, another instance of how Perón gathered power from the radio. Radio Belgrano was the largest of the Argentine Radio Networks. The second reason was that the radio network was not in nationalized state control, thus should cause no worries about critiques from the United States because of Cold War politics. Perón placed a loyal party at the helm of an important radio station, someone that he trusted to follow rules and regulations about culture. There was no fear that Eva would broadcast anything counter to the government. Eva's power grew because of the link to both LRA Radio Nacional and Radio Belgrano at the upper levels. The expansion of LRA Radio Nacional in the following years was critical to how Eva, radio, and working class audiences interacted.

By October 1947, the Central Bank and the Instituto Argentino de Promoción del Intercambio (IAPI) officially closed the sale of Radio Belgrano.⁷⁸ The Peronist government considered Radio Belgrano a “monopoly” and took over the rest of the network in the next months.⁷⁹ The takeover of more Yankelevich stations was one way that the Peronist government flexed its political muscles. The complete acquisition of Radio Belgrano, however, was unusual. Argentine radio historian Jorge Noguera noted there were three irregularities in the sale of radio networks: first, the bill of sale omitted the transactions posted as well as other legal requisites; second, prices were fixed by mere agreement of the parties, without proof of confrontation and inventory values; third, the sales avoided the involvement of all regulatory agencies and did not belong to the General Accounting Office

78. Matallana, “*Inventando La Radio Comercial*,” 3.

79. *Ibid.*, 4.

or Departments of Broadcasting and Post Telecommunications Technical Association.⁸⁰ All the problems with Perón's acquisition of Radio Belgrano point out that the Peronist government was not ready to take over new radio stations. While Perón wanted to promote his "New Argentina" on the radio, the administration could not handle the problems of acquisition. The sale of Radio Belgrano demonstrates that the populist government was not prepared for state ownership of the nation's infrastructure. The complications at the bill of sale demonstrate the rushed nature of the sale of the radio network.

Meanwhile, however, the acquisition of Radio Belgrano was good for Yankelevich, mainly because he was not responsible for the day-to-day operations of the radio station.⁸¹ Yankelevich was free to travel and escape Peron's repression. In the requirements of the sale of Radio Belgrano to Perón, Yankelevich ensured that his son, Samuel Yankelevich would stay on as Program Director for five years.⁸² In the following year, the international Inter-American Association of Broadcasters elected Jaime Yankelevich president of their organization.⁸³ Yankelevich, by the end of the decade, brought television innovation to Argentina. In 1948, Perón appointed Yankelevich as the Director General of Broadcasting. In

80. Nogue, *Radiodifusión en la Argentina*, 59.

81. *Ibid.*, 61. Yankelevich also received ten thousand dollars between 1947 and 1951 due to his sole duty of CEO Coordinator.

82. Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo*, 147–148.

83. "Broadcasters Elect Nunn," *New York Times*, July 3, 1948; Matallana, "Inventando La Radio Comercial," 163. The Inter-American Association of Broadcasters was a pro-American organization that did not support Peronist policies. Matallana argued the Inter-American Association of Broadcasters was anti-Peronist since 1943. The question of Yankelevich's political persuasion arises from his support of the Inter-American Association of Broadcasters. The absence of hard evidence makes the answer to this question trickier. Yankelevich was obviously not a part of the Peronist propaganda machine and not a target of political incorporation through rhetoric, yet Yankelevich sold Radio Belgrano for a considerable sum less than the network was worth. Yankelevich joined a broadcaster's association that was heavily known to be anti-Peronist. The next year Yankelevich became part of the Peronist administration and the radio. The political persuasion of Yankelevich in 1947 was not evident to the on-looker. I think that Yankelevich was not a fan of Perón from the early 1940s, yet because Perón had such a cultural influence and political power Yankelevich did not, or could not, challenge him. The reason Yankelevich sold Radio Belgrano to Perón was Yankelevich's attempt to leave the country and be free. But Yankelevich could not stay away from Argentina and returned. The position as Director General of Broadcasting gave Yankelevich power and influence over radio. I do not think that Yankelevich was happy to take the position in a Peronist administration.

his acceptance of the position, Yankelevich had to turn down the presidency of the Inter-American Association of Broadcasters.⁸⁴ The position gave Yankelevich political advantage to control radio content and a monthly salary of twenty thousand pesos.⁸⁵ The average working class family made approximately \$167 pesos a month.⁸⁶ Yankelevich's monthly salary was more than twelve times that of the average worker. Yankelevich, thus solidified his relationship between radio and the state. From his position as Director General, Yankelevich administered and adhered to radio content according to the Peronist standards.

With the fall of Radio Belgrano to the state, other radio stations became nervous. On September 20, 1947, a newspaper editorial stated that there were modifications to come to LRA Radio Nacional.⁸⁷ Perón meant to frighten other commercial radio stations that knew what happened to Radio Belgrano could happen to them.⁸⁸ The state began buying smaller independent radio stations, such as Radio Liberty and Radio Porteño.⁸⁹ However, the expansion into smaller radio stations was not as effective a method for Perón's cultural expansion as the acquisition of Radio Belgrano.

These acquisitions in 1947 pose two questions about radio and the state. First, how did Argentina afford constant payments to private owners? Argentina's economy was

84. "Editorial: Our Respects to Goar Mestre," *Broadcasting*, November 1, 1948, 46, American Radio History; "Editorial: Perón P(h)ony (Ex)Press," *Broadcasting*, August 9, 1948, 56, American Radio History. The article gives high praise to Goar Mestre who was the current president of the Inter-American Association of Broadcasters, who was doing his part to extend free radio throughout Latin America. The article has another interesting tidbit about Mestre ran the United States radio in Cuba. The Argentine government reacted, "calling for death threats to Mr. Mestre and Mr. Clark," according to a later editorial. The United States senate became involved with an official investigation. The Argentine rhetoric of "Yankee Imperialism" stands out, due to the anti-United States stance of the rhetoric, another link in the chain against United States and Argentine relations.

85. Matallana, "*Inventando La Radio Comercial*," 163. "Perón Radio Monopoly Declare Absolute," *Broadcasting*, August 20, 1948, 98, American Radio History.

86. Milanesio, *Workers Go Shopping in Argentina*, 34, 150–151.

87. Ulanovsky et al., *Días de Radio*, 161.

88. Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación*, 178. Sirvén argued that in a conversation between Eva and Jaime Yankelevich, Eva stated that the Yankelevich needed to tell other radio stations to watch out that the same could happen to them. While this is a major revelation, the problem with Sirvén's account is lack of credible sources.

89. Luna, *Perón y sus tiempo 1st*: 92.

stabilizing after World War II, as Argentina's urban employment increased to more than before 1940.⁹⁰ The GDP from 1945 to 1948 grew by twenty-nine percent due the post-World War II economic boom.⁹¹ Most of the new industries created under the First Five Year Plan were small industrial firms that had small numbers of workers.⁹² Overall, the year 1947 held positive economic news for Argentina. The chief economist was Miguel Miranda, Minister of Finance. Miranda controlled the Central Bank and was involved in the purchase of radio stations. One of the key ways Miranda incorporated radio networks was through the unions. The IAPI was a multi-industrial sector union that was a catch all of Argentine trade unions.⁹³ Perón spent approximately eighteen million pesos acquiring radio stations, showing their importance to his political agenda.⁹⁴ Because Argentina's economy was expanding in 1947, the acquisition of radio networks did not create negative effects. While Argentina experienced an economic boom, Perón had a laundry list of reforms to enact. The fact that Perón budgeted money for radio, instead of other social programs, demonstrates the importance of radio to his government.

Second, did listeners find any change in the quality of programs? The answer depends on one's perspective. To Yankelevich, Argentine radio was stagnant. The government takeover of radio meant continuation of previous stories and song styles. Félix Luna stated that listeners did not notice any change in the programs after Perón took over Radio Belgrano.⁹⁵ The second effect was Perón tightening regulations concerning anti-government speech on the radio. The variety of views and opinions on the radio dropped considerably by

90. Rock, *Argentina*, 265.

91. *Ibid.*, 276.

92. *Ibid.*, 258.

93. *Ibid.*, 268; Crassweller, *Perón and the Enigmas*, 217. Rock pointed out that the IAPI was integral in selling wool, cereals, and although Rock did not mention the radio, Crassweller stated that the IAPI was at the center of the First Five Year Plan and was a statist policy.

94. Luna, *Perón y sus tiempo Ist*: 93.

95. *Ibid.*

1947; otherwise, there were no other effects except that radio clearly shows Perón's heading towards additional control and state manipulation as he consolidated his administrative control of the nation.

The Radio Belgrano Worker's "Complaint" and its Consequences

The Radio Belgrano workers' "complaint" brought some key reforms to radio. The fact that the workers forced Perón's hand did not sit well with the leader. One of the changes was that the government bought Radio El Mundo and Radio Splendid.⁹⁶ Another factor could have been the bombing of Radio Libertad, earlier in February 1947, which may have convinced other radio stations to submit gladly to Perón's offer of purchase.⁹⁷ The government, through the insistence of Eva, purchased fifty-one percent of the shares of *El Mundo* through the group ALEO.⁹⁸ The purchase of *El Mundo* meant two things: first, that the Peronist government had an active hand in the newspaper business; second, that Radio El Mundo now was incorporated into the government.⁹⁹

The Peronist government had effectively brought all four major radio networks under its control by the end of 1947. Through the manipulation of a key event on Radio Belgrano, Perón gained the largest radio network. The chain reaction of the strike from Radio Belgrano

96. Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo*, 106. Mercado does not give figures on how much each radio network was sold for. Nor is it clear how much Radio Splendid sold for.

97. First, there is no definite link between Perón and the Radio Libertad bombing, but other radio networks would have known about the bombing and been suspicious. There is not a link in any of the historiography of the Radio Libertad's bombing, thus, no link to radio sales and Radio Libertad. But again, the element of fear that is not present in documents does not mean that it was not there.

98. Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación*, 120–121. The government also bought several other smaller newspapers at this point like, *Mundo Argentino*, *Selecta*, *El Hogar*, *Mundo Deportivo*, *Mundo Agrario*, *Mundo Atómico*, *Mundo Infantil*, *Mundo Radial*, *Caras y Caretas*, and *P.B.T.*

99. "Perón's Putsch: Radio Ambitions Revealed," *Broadcasting*, September 13, 1948, 32, American Radio History. For example, a United States radio magazine, *Broadcasting*, claimed that, "The tell-tale document is a report and balance sheet of the National Bank of Argentina for 1947. The article disclosed that the Buenos Aires bank was authorized to acquire common carrier facilities. In addition, it authorized 12 million pesos for acquiring by the Dept. of Posts and Long Distance Communications, various radio instruments of the country." There was no official statement of how much the government made for each radio station.

workers caused the Argentine government to own both newspapers and expanded the control over radio stations in Argentina. The expansion of radio domination was what Perón wanted. The advocacy of expansion of Perón's vision of culture now had two official avenues to disseminate information. The expansion of Argentine state control on the radio, however, had no effect on the programs to the listener. The stability of radio programs and regulations affected who was on the radio and only increased Perón's cultural and political control of the radio. The Peronist government effectively used the radio as a political tool, in 1947, through radio expansion and relationships.

1948: Radio and Constitutional Convention

The political changes that Perón made in 1947 had a test run in 1948 with an election for a constitutional convention. The special election demonstrated how the radio played in the riptide political landscape. Because the Peronist government controlled all the major radio outlets, dissenters were prevented from gaining any airtime on the radio.¹⁰⁰ The central figure in this authoritarian management was Eva, who was the face and voice of the Perón administration to both the working class and radio listeners. The culture that Perón wanted to create was in formation.

A major way that radio helped to formulate Perón's *Justicialismo* culture was through songs and programs present on radio. Government regulations throughout the 1930s and 1940s even specified the amounts and types of music performed on the radio. Even if music consumption was not through the radio, but through purchase of records, the radio had an

100. "Argentina's Chief Urges Air Freedom," *Broadcasting*, July 5, 1948, 38, American Radio History; Luna, *Perón y sus tiempo Ist*:316. The article pointed out that the opposition party did not have any access to the radio since the previous year. Second, it is of interest to note that Perón used the language of "Freedom of Speech," a lexiconic United States' term in the political jab. Also, Luna, offered the same idea of the lack of radio representation equated to favor Perón's political position.

effect on the musical composition. The regulations of the *Ladifundio* language, in the early 1940s, had a direct effect on the tangos of pre-Perón Argentina. The regulations of the specific time amounts of genres also played into cultural affinity. The market in saturation of tango and folk music meant a cultural level practice towards integration in the opposite market.

Felix Luna has pointed to three great tangos of 1948, “Cafetin of Buenos Aires,” “Sur,” and “Barrio de Tango.”¹⁰¹ “Cafetin of Buenos Aires” was a more traditional tango in its harmonic progression and rhythm structure. The solo near the end of the song, with a complex relationship with the harmonic structure of chord and the melody points directly to a jazz influence. “Sur” was a synthesis between traditional ballroom tango and jazz. The staccato rhythm that punctuated the song was traditional tango, yet the strings and the complex chords demonstrate the influence of jazz on the composer. The song has a flavor of Broadway ballads of the late 1940s, a Frank Sinatra-esque sound. “Barrio de Tango” tonal and harmonic complexity demonstrates the composer’s interest in jazz. The intro repeat as a solo was a classic New York Broadway motif. The minor section was a jazz innovation, originating from songs like “All the Things You Are.” The incorporation of jazz into popular musical compositions in the late 1940s demonstrates the importance of radio transmissions on society.

All three of these tangos point to influences outside of the conception of the tango in Buenos Aires. There are two important factors from these three tangos: first, that the composer knew and incorporated musical ideas that were not from the composer’s area; second, these recordings were at the top of the charts in 1948. The music spoke to some aspect of the culture. The mechanics of music delivery to listeners was the radio. The

101. Luna, *Perón y sus tiempo* 1st:329–330.

popularity of the compositions, with the incorporation of non-Argentine musical vocabulary, clearly demonstrates the power of the radio to connect music to a larger audience. The radio augmented popular tastes by trends on the radio. The influence of outside compositions was not only in tango, but also in folklore music.

Oscar Chimoso stated that in 1948, Argentine folk musician Antonio Tormo out sold tango records, and in Buenos Aires there were folk clubs by the 1940s.¹⁰² The popularity of folklore music spread throughout Argentina. In 1950, Antonio Tormo recorded, “The Ranch ‘and the Cambicha’” which became the most successful recording in Argentine history. The music of the song had very traditional folk music qualities, the double stops, the prominence of the guitar, and the rhythm. The lyrics have the double speak of the tango. The influence of the tango on the lyrics demonstrate the cross-acculturation of tango on folk music.

The importance of tango and folk music’s crossing of both musical and lyrical styles was that radio became the main avenue for the dissemination of songs. Through radio broadcasts throughout Argentina, from Buenos Aires to Corrientes, listeners were able to hear tango records simultaneously. The cross-acculturation in music demonstrated the importance of radio without hard statistical numbers that brought both the rural and the urban together under Perón’s cultural umbrella approach.

The second reflection of radio’s mass media culture onto Argentine society was the melodrama. The formulaic artistic drama found on radio programs like *Chispazo de Tradición* was an example of melodrama, which had become a central art form of expression in Argentina in the 1930s and 1940s.¹⁰³ The importance of the melodrama on Argentine radio demonstrates the radio’s cultural power. Historian Daniel James has argued that the

102. Chamosa, *The Argentine Folklore Movement*, 175 and 177.

103. Karush, *Culture of Class*, xi.

melodrama was a part of the working classes life. In James's work, *Doña Maria*, he argued that the life of a working class woman named Doña Maria revolved around melodrama.¹⁰⁴

Both music and melodrama were central to the 1940s Argentine culture, and both were found on the radio. The link between music sales and cultural importance is hard to quantify. The methodology of transmission of songs on the radio, to listeners, who then buy records, was a stable business model. The radio played a unique part in transforming Argentine culture in the 1940s. The Peronist government used the music and culture on the radio for political advantage and to help implement the cultural changes that Perón planned for Argentine society.

In 1948, Perón coined the term *Justicialismo* (Justicialist) as his political ideology. The president defined the term as a Christian and humanist capitalism combined with collectivism and individualism, idealism, and materialism.¹⁰⁵ The new ideological construction was a name for the new culture that Perón wanted to create with his First Five Year Plan. Perón stated, "We wish to bring culture and science within the reach of all Argentines so as to put an end to a state of things where men are judged by their money instead of their aptitude, their intelligence, and their will to study."¹⁰⁶ The continuities from the First Five Year Plan, in Perón's manner of access to the *Justicialismo* culture by all Argentines, through science and use of the state were found in 1948. Perón's economic plans benefited the lower working classes in Argentina, who made up approximately fifty-three percent of Argentina's national income.¹⁰⁷

104. James, *Dona Maria's Story*, 253–255.

105. Rock, *Argentina*, 286.

106. Perón, *The Voice of Perón*, 167. From, "Lecture on the Reform of the Constitution 1948"

107. Milanesio, *Workers Go Shopping in Argentina*, 52.

From 1947, the Peronist government had expanded radio control almost ten-fold throughout Argentina. The special election for the Constitutional Convention in 1948 was the first test of radio and expansion of Peronist power. The Argentine government considered various methods to gain control of private radio companies by restricting station licenses.¹⁰⁸

While Perón's rhetoric and major focus was on the internal structure of Argentina, the world community, specifically the United States, saw clear problems with Perón's method of radio takeovers. The United States positioned itself as anti-Perón, due to the Argentine leader's socialist-type takeover of the press, as well as many other things, including Argentina's refusal to enter World War II as an ally until the very end in 1945. Perón's reaction was clear: with Argentina's internal economic growth, he did not see the need to fall once again under United States' protection.¹⁰⁹ Perón coined the term, "*Tercera Posición*" (Third Position) as opposed to both Soviet communism and United States capitalism. Perón's Third Position, outside of the sphere of influence of the United States and the Soviet Union, was at the cusp of the third-world non-alignment movement that leaders in Latin America helped to lead.¹¹⁰ By the end of the 1940s, the need for foreign investors increased and resulted in a sea change to previous statements due to inflation and the ISI program not taking off as effectively as Perón had wanted.

108. "Protests Against the Control of Radio: Letter to I.A.A.B. Charges Government Plans 'Thorough Reorganization' Aimed at Private Interests," *Radio Daily*, February 13, 1948, 5, American Radio History.

109. "Senate Group Asks Study of 'Incident,'" *Broadcasting*, August 16, 1948, 24, American Radio History; "Argentine 'Incident' Goes to Marshall," *Broadcasting*, August 2, 1948, 4, American Radio History. Several of Perón's moves were directed at agitation of the United States, including an incident where a United States radio correspondent's mail was published in the newspaper *Democracia*. The United States was extremely upset due to the concerns and lack of free speech in Argentina. Coupled with the earlier Senate investigations about anti-American attitudes of Perón and the radio, all lead to hostile relationship between the two nations. The mail tampering incident made it all the way to Secretary of State Department Marshall's attention.

110. L.S. Stavrianos, *Global Rift: The Third World Comes of Age* (New York: William Morrow and Company Inc., 1981).

The 1948 Elections

The 1948 election was pivotal to Argentina and reshaped the country. There were a series of elections in 1948, provincial and national, that advocated for the Peronist agenda. The most important suffrage participation in 1948 was the special election for a new Constitutional Convention to replace the 1853 Constitution. The radio played a key role in how Perón gained support for the Constitutional Convention. The provincial elections of 1948 also had significant political and radio dimensions.

Argentina had had an established constitution since 1853, but Perón believed the former document had many problems especially justicialista influence and the lack of Peronism. The first was the lack of Peronist language within the document. If Perón was to reshape Argentina, an official government redesign associated with Perón's name was the correct place to start. The president pledged to create a "*Justicialista*" successor to the Constitution of 1853.¹¹¹ Perón's second problem was his own political calculations. Perón saw the expansion of the vote of suffrage to the Argentine territories in the South and the North as a method to gain votes. The 1947 Argentine Census had demonstrated that there was a substantial population in the territories that did not have political suffrage.¹¹² The Constitution of 1949 established a new ideological set of values for Perón's government. First, the incumbent president could seek more than two terms. The national senators were no

111. Rock, *Argentina*, 288.

112. *IV Censo General de la Nación*, Censo, Tomo I: Censo de Poblacion (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Presidencia de la Nación y Ministerio de asuntos técnicos, 1947); Elmer S. Miller, *Los Tobas Argentinos. Armonía y Disonancia en Una Sociedad* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Siglo Veinteuno Argentina Editorial, 1979), 51. The indigenous people in the Chaco and Formosa regions were by this time staunchly pro-Peronists. One example comes from years afterwards when a Radical party member attempted to bribe a local chief with an excellent meal. After the meal the chief said to the Radical party member, "The wine was good, the food was great, but we are all Peronists." Perón listened to indigenous people and treated them with some respect, thus the indigenous people of the Northwestern province of Chaco and Formosa's political allegiance to Peronism.

longer to be selected by provincial legislatures. The terms of congress were extended to six years. The most controversial provision gave the president direct power to intervene in provinces' political processes.¹¹³ The 1948 vote for a constitutional convention was a heavy-handed way to increase the electoral base's support for Peronism.

The Peronist Party won sixty-two percent of the national vote.¹¹⁴ Figure 4 demonstrates the provincial returns and the radio stations. The political and cultural changes that occurred between 1946 and 1948 were significant yet the biggest modification was the radio from private to state run. One of the greatest alterations was in the La Rioja province in 1948. The reason why La Rioja changed from moderate support for Perón to almost unanimous support for Perón resulted from the adjustments in the government structure. The population supported Perón, yet the provincial government opposed him. Perón destroyed the original patron-client relationship with executive power and removed the legislators from office. With the roadblocks removed, La Rioja turned from moderate to significant Peronist support. Corrientes was another province that radically swung pro-Peronist and voted in favor of a constitutional convention. The major radio networks in Corrientes were Radio Belgrano and LRA Radio Nacional, both under state control. The combined influence of state radio helped sway Corrientes towards support of Perón.

The other Congressional and Senatorial elections were central to Perón's political power increase in 1948. In the Congressional elections, Perón gained seats. In the Federal Capital, for instance, the increase of pro-Perón voter turnout rose from 304,854 in 1946 to

113. Rock, *Argentina*, 288–289.

114. Dieter Nohlen, *Elections in the Americas: A Data Handbook*, vol. Volume 2: South America (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 99.

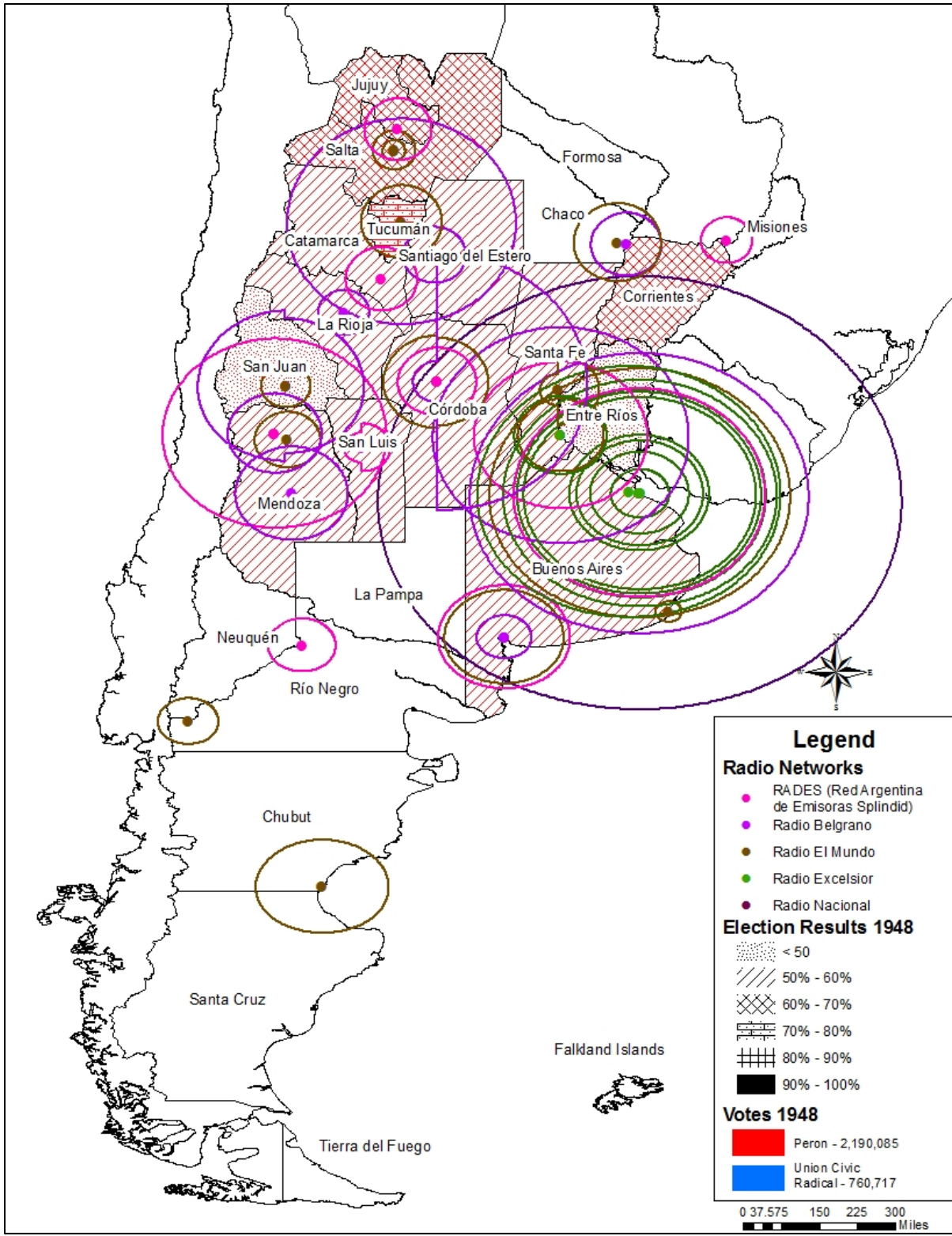


Figure 3. Constitutional Convention Election Returns and Radio Networks.

307,000 in 1948, a 2,146-vote increase.¹¹⁵ One reason that Perón's support grew in Buenos Aires was the expansion of the vote to women. The increase in vote numbers did not affect overall turnout, which was somewhat steady from 1946. The state control of both LRA Radio Nacional and Radio Belgrano changed from 1946 to 1948. Thus, this diminished number of dissonant voices in the four radio networks in the Federal Capital's evidenced in the electoral returns.

Provincial elections of governors and legislative bodies demonstrated how the Peronist method of voter attraction through radio did not have complete success. Córdoba moderately supported Perón in 1946. The 1948 race for Governor was won by Brigadier Juan San Martín, a moderate Peronist.¹¹⁶ The central attraction of the governor was his active military career. Córdoba received a large number of various radio transmissions. In 1948, the radio was not the only qualifier of the governor's race, but Martin's link to the military also played a role in the election. The Córdoba governor's race highlighted a problem quickly manifesting itself throughout the Peronist contests: the radio was not the only political tool necessary to gain political power.

The election in 1948 demonstrated the shifting media landscape in relationship to political power. Perón's answer to the 1948 charge was the expansion of state control of other radio networks. The Constitutional Convention clearly gave Perón the political power to change the fundamentals of Argentina's democracy.¹¹⁷

115. Luna, *Perón y sus tiempo 1st*: 189.

116. *Ibid.*, 1st: 43.

117. While Perón was reforming Argentina's political apparatus, Getulio Vargas in Brazil was also expanding political power outside of constitutional conventions. Vargas was a populist leader elected in the 1930s and during the late 1940s lead a military coup to create what he termed the "Estado Novo." There are many similarities to both leaders, each used radio as a means of communication, each attempted to reform the "culture" in images that suited their own political goals, and both utilized the military to gain power. The fact that both leaders used the media so heavily to create a political state that was to their liking demonstrates the

1949: The end of the Fiesta

The Constitutional Convention occurred in 1949 and gave Perón more constitutionally based power. His government went forward with several plans to expand radio as a political institution. In 1949, Perón pushed forward with the Servicio Internacional Radiofónico Argentino (SIRA).

On April 11, 1949, Perón signed the constitution of the Servicio Internacional Radiofonico Argentino, an organization that broadcasted to the exterior of Argentina.¹¹⁸ SIRA was to be a method of using the radio to conduct foreign policy. The broadcasts were in a number of foreign languages. The goal was to expand Argentina's cultural influence abroad and establish listener bases throughout the world.¹¹⁹ The primary purpose of SIRA was to educate.¹²⁰ Most critically, education meant indoctrination of Peronism. The international focus of the SIRA program was another way Perón extended his influence outside of Argentina. Cultural expansion through the radio equated to commercial and political expansion throughout South America.

Not everyone favored the Peronist power expansion. At the Constitutional Convention in 1949, a member of the UCR, Moisés Lebensohn, raised the issue of state control of radio. Moses stated that radio networks, "were acquired by the State without legislative authorization, granting corporations use to, after which it is condensed leaders of the government to make big profits and to control the vital element for the information and

problem of 1940s populism in underdeveloped nations. Both leaders needed to dominate the message to the population to enact reforms without opposition.

118. Nogue, *Radiodifusión en la Argentina*, 159.

119. SIRA was disbanded in 1955 by Perón. The military government in 1958 reinstated the SIRA as policy and expanded the program to become incorporated in LRA Radio Nacional.

120. Nogue, *Radiodifusión en la Argentina*, 159.

judgment of the people.”¹²¹ The problem, historian Richard Horvath has argued, was that the legal maneuvers to gain control of radio stations created a series of policy failures and problems for Peronism.¹²² The UCR understood that radio was a political tool that the Peronist administration used effectively. Peronist opposition had no avenue to address the problems of radio and state control to the larger population due to the strict regulations on the radio.¹²³ The domination of the radio was political and both parties that clearly understood how to play the game.

By the end of 1949, the Argentine senate began hearings about anti-Peronist activities inside of Argentina. The Visca Commission was the watchdog group started by representative Joseph Emilio Visca to investigate “anti-Argentine activities.” Visca was a former journalist and the investigative committee focused most of their resources on media influences. The Visca Commission was important to Perón’s vision of the “New” Argentine culture, because this group politically purified Peronism perceived attacks from the mass media anti-Argentine activities. Visca was important in the incorporation of newspapers *La Prensa* and *Clarín* in 1950. The Visca Commission became more powerful after 1950 and is a major focus of the next chapter.

Plans of LRA Radio Nacional Expansion

The Argentine government’s plans for radio expansion in 1950 were all through LRA Radio Nacional. By this time, the Peronist government had direct control of all four major

121. Ricardo Horvath, *La trama secreta de la radiodifusión argentina: los dueños de la información electrónica y el largo brazo de su poder* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ediciones Unidad, 1986), 60.

122. Ibid.

123. Luna, *Perón y sus tiempo*, 1st: 90–96. Luna implied that the opposition did not have access to the radio. This idea emerged later, in 1952 and 1955, when the opposition party asked for radio time specifically to address the nation.



Figure 4. Proposed Radio Expansion of LRA Radio Nacional

radio networks. The only logical expansion of radio was through the state network. Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate the limited availability of radio reception in 1947 throughout Argentina. The political incorporation of such provinces as Santa Cruz and Rio Negro needed to have official Argentine culture in radio. The purposes of extension were to “bring Argentine culture” to these distant provinces and former territories, to replace newspapers as the leading source of news, and to bring them under Peronist political control.

The political incorporation of previous territories was a perfect place for Perón to establish cultural hegemony. The limited radio stations in the new southern provinces of Chubut, Santa Cruz, and the northern provinces of Chaco and Formosa, translated to a cultural landscape ripe for Perón to incorporate into *Justalista* culture. The official reason for Perón to increase national security and defense through LRA Radio Nacional was Cold War political issues which led to the creation of the SIRA.¹²⁴ The plan was to create twenty-one new radio stations throughout Argentina. Figure 4 demonstrates the proposed expansion of LRA Radio Nacional.¹²⁵ In 1950, the expansion covered all the territory that previously had suffrage in 1948. The few radio stations in the south did not have a large range. One of the most interesting expansion projects was in San Juan, where LRA Radio Nacional was an attempt to wrestle political power away from the Graffigna independent radio station. The coverage area expansion of LRA Radio Nacional propagated the new content.¹²⁶

124. *Ulanovsky et al., Días de Radio*, 206.

125. Only LRA 3 Radio Santa Rosa, La Pampa in 1950. The other radio stations were completed in various stages over the next thirty years. After Perón was exiled, the military government put a hold on all projects that was Perón. The military government in 1955-1960 was one of the most anti-Peronist regimes, even going as far as jailing people for saying “Perón” In 1958 the next LRA Radio Nacional was completed. The fact that even the most anti-Peronist regime saw political use of radio expansion.

126. By the end of 1955, there were only four of the proposed new stations created. The network expansion plans took until the 1980s before completion. The political benefit of LRA Radio Nacional’s expansion was not lost on the Peronist opposition. Arguably, the strongest evidence of support for the politicization of radio happened after Perón’s exile. The military regime was vehemently anti-Peronist, even forcibly jailing people who spoke of Perón name. In 1955 the military regime resumed construction of LRA

The content on LRA Radio Nacional was as politically important as the coverage area expansion. In January of 1950, the government decided that radios should include a mandatory fifty percent of airtime devoted to national music.¹²⁷ LRA Radio Nacional continued to provide large quantities of classical music and national music.¹²⁸ Clearly, the news media outlet was central as a method of extending Peronism. LRA Radio Nacional provided keynote lecturers by nutritionists, historians, and other culturalists. The discussions of government plans related to the First Five Year Plan, was one particular highlighted lecture on LRA Radio Nacional.¹²⁹ The radio became the conduit for education of the population, a central tenet of Perón's political designs on the radio as a tool to propagate an "official" popular culture. *Justalísimo* was projected on LRA Radio Nacional. With the expansion of radio coverage, the expansion of *Justalísimo* occurred simultaneously.

Radio programs on LRA Radio Nacional diversified and incorporated both new ideas and stories into previous models, and brought new people into the existing mass media culture. LRA Radio Nacional scheduled fiction stories such as "Huaynito, the Indian child," to expand to people inside Argentina that LRA Radio Nacional now reached.¹³⁰ Shows, like Huaynito, were an attempt to demonstrate to the broader Argentine audience that Perón's message was universal to all those who lived in Argentina. The Peronist propaganda machine kicked into overdrive with the creation of narratives focused on children and state means. The children's radio program, "The Legend of the Bottle," for example, was a story aimed at

Radio Nacional's towers. The reason was to expand and maintain cultural control of the population, subduing rebellious impulses. By the early 1970s, when Perón returned from exile, LRA Radio Nacional had expanded from five radio stations to almost twenty.

127. Ulanovsky, *La Radio Nacional*, 81.

128. Ibid.

129. Ibid.

130. Ibid., 84.

children about the good habits of savings.¹³¹ The early Argentine conception of radio as a teacher was exhibited in the new radio content. Radio programs also were a means of political leverage; the chaos of the previous years now had a method to control the lower classes. Each of the new radio programs on LRA Radio Nacional promoted the state program to incorporate new audiences and reach everyone government propaganda.

By the end of 1950, the Peronist government controlled all of Argentina's radio stations except for one in San Juan. The complete domination of the radio gave Perón unprecedented cultural and political power. Expansion of LRA Radio Nacional into new territory translated into Perón gathering new political constituents. Central to the method that Perón used to gain the radio stations was Eva Duarte; political celebrity gave Perón a political edge early and continued to have political returns.

Conclusion

The period between 1946 to 1949 saw a drastic change in how Perón approached the radio. Radio played a part in Perón's election to power in 1946. The change from private to public radio had far reaching consequences on how Perón both interacted with voters and media perception in Argentina.

The first Peronist government used radio effectively to connect to the mass audience and voters, thereby creating a political popularity. The augmentation of the patron-client relationship from personal to impersonal was the key to Perón's elections and subsequent cultural control, and radio was the medium between the voters and the administration's agenda. Broadcasts pulled in listeners with music, lectures, political campaigns, advertisements, and news. Radio was the means of incorporating lower class voters.

131. Ibid.

From 1945 to 1950, Perón effectively used the radio to break down traditional political alliances in Argentina to create a new political basis of support. State control of private and public radio meant that Perón expanded cultural propaganda. The First Five Year Plan was the central document that focused on the expansion of *Justicialismo* culture. Perón saw radio as the avenue for cultural expansion.

Perón relied on key relationships with radio personalities as a way to ensure political success. Eva Duarte was one of the central figures who connected Juan Perón to the working class population. The state control of the radio under the leadership of Eva meant that Perón had an advocate for his political policies on the radio. Yankelevich, although subdued in his approach, was a central figure in the Peronist government in relationship to the radio. Yankelevich's return to Argentina in an official capacity as radio manager meant that Perón also had a powerful innovator as an ally in a key political position.

While the first Peronist administration masterfully used radio for political gains, problems lurked underneath the surface. Perón focused too much of his attention on the industrial working class base, while he neglected the traditional Argentine political and economic rural cattle base. The focus on unions and better work meant that the traditional agrarian base of power suffered. ISI programs were to avoid international dependency, yet inherently, any industrialization needed to have foreign consumers of manufactured products. A clear example is in Córdoba, where they manufactured cars in the 1950s, yet when domestic consumption was saturated, companies shifted to export to other Latin American countries. The problem was that the industrial base had no established international trading partners to gain capital from, thus the government support produced false promises of

economic expansion. In addition, industrial expansion, denoted by Rostow's great "take off," did not take off as the leader had expected.

At the same time, Argentina played into Cold War politics. The large surplus of cattle products in the United States meant that it was not as interested any more in Argentine cattle. Any interest with the Eastern bloc countries equated to forceful condemnation from the United States and the key trade partner of Great Britain. International pressure came from the United States to keep Argentina within its economic sphere. Argentina was left in a precarious position: no partner wanted either industrial goods or cattle exports. A trade agreement with Great Britain in 1950 allowed the sale of Argentine cattle products for a high profit yield.

The failure of his Industrial Import Substitution Project to "take off" quickly enough forced Perón to rely on the traditional base of cattle as a method of international trade. The problem was Perón's original support for the industrial workers over the cattle had alienated Argentina's traditional economic rural strength by 1947. Perón began heavily courting the ranch farmers, while at the same time neglecting the industrial workers that he had previously supported.¹³² The problems of the Cold War quickly manifested into Argentine politics negatively for Perón.

Despite his broader failures, the period from 1945 to 1950 was nevertheless the best years for Perón relative to political expansion, economic growth, and *Jusicialista* cultural expansion. The unforeseen problems that lay ahead for Perón challenged the political hegemony of the administration. Cultural theorist Gramsci argued that hegemony came from a condition where the dominant class does not merely rule a society but leads it through the

132. Chasteen, *Born in Blood & Fire*, 245–252; Keen and Haynes, *A History of Latin America*, 356–375; Rock, *Argentina*, 262–317; Luna, *Perón y sus tiempo*, 1st: 1–320; Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 2nd: 1–323; Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 3rd: 1–289.

exercise of “intellectual and moral leadership.”¹³³ Perón incorporated lower class symbols as a way to gain their political support. The leader first gained control of lower class cultural symbols, after gaining power he then manipulated programs and audience support to further dominate. The “Aluvión Zoológico” then was more than just the economic rise of the lower classes, but a cultural definition that had political dimensions.

The Third Act of Perón’s political melodrama ended in 1950, with the attacks of anti-Peronists groups on the radio that quickly followed by the incorporation of the two major newspapers outside Perón’s domination. During the Fourth Act, the problems within the administration manifested from Act Three. The Peronist government saw radio as a lifeline to the voter population but did not learn from the political defeats of earlier candidates. Coupled with the leader’s political blindsidedness, the economic problems of 1950 mushroomed into monsters; the rise of dissention both on the radio and publicly gave the working class ammunition to launch against Perón. The racist terminology, Aluvión Zoológico, the zoological flood, rose between 1945 and 1950. The flood became, as Felix Luna put it, “a fiesta.” Yet the flood was not threatening to wash away the traditional Argentine culture, simply replace it with the *Justicialismo* culture, steered by the Peronist ship of state.

133. John Sotrey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, 5th ed. (Edinburgh Gate: Pearson Education Limited, 2009), 79–82, 213–214.

CHAPTER 3: CLANDESTINE RADIO: PERÓN AND THE RADIO 1950-1955

Introduction

After years of Peronist domination of mass media communications, the Radical Party was finally able to give a radio address on July 27, 1955. The leader of the party was Arturo Frondizi, a young politician from Buenos Aires, who ran as the Vice President in 1951. Frondizi addressed the contemporary problems of economic instability, government overreach, corruption, foreign influence in Argentina, and lack of freedom of press and speech. Radio Belgrano carried the speech live, and audiences throughout Argentina rejoiced at hearing a different political perspective. The streets of Buenos Aires filled with students and other anti-Peronist protesters.¹ Perón arrested Frondizi shortly after his speech on grounds of disrespect (*desacato*). Frondizi was the first political opponent to gain access to the radio but not the last. Over the next few months, the Radical Party used the radio to enter households and describe the problems within Peronist Argentina. Within a month, opposition radio stations in Puerto Belgrano, Buenos Aires, and Uruguay broadcast anti-Peronist sentiments that politically destabilized the population. By the end of August, Argentina was ready for revolution. The radio was the central instrument that facilitated the mobilization of the public to remove Perón.

The crisis years of 1950-1955 demonstrate that the Peronist administration loss of control over the radio and news narrative led directly to Perón's exile. The successes of the

1. Rock, *Argentina*, 316.

government in the late 1940s were the catalyst for the administration to further use radio as a tool of propaganda. The over-reliance on radio to create political narratives that did not reflect reality was the key problem with Perón's messages. The transition from the 1940s to the 1950s brought economic problems that ultimately drove to Argentine's dissatisfaction with Perón.

The transition between Perón's domination of the radio to complete lack of control demonstrated the political breakdown of the Peronist government. By 1955, "Clandestine Radio," an anti-Peronist station, garnered large audiences that countered both content and listenership of LRA Radio Nacional. The secret to the oppositional group's success was what Perón had originally utilized to gain political appeal: populist sentiment against a corrupt government and plans to bring prosperity to Argentines.

1950, the Year of the Liberator

On New Year's Eve, President Juan Perón made a radio announcement congratulating Argentina and celebrating the New Year, saying, "Let this be our battle cry for the year 1950 — the year of the liberator San Martin: work for our own well-being and for the well-being of the world."² The rhetoric of expansion of Argentine pride, the well-being, and way of life to the entire world as the mission of 1950 was a grand statement. By the rhetorical use of the Argentine hero San Martin, Perón attempted to recast Argentina's contemporary political and economic fortunes. By naming 1950 as the year of the Liberator, two points of irony emerged: first, Perón advocated for freedom from the imperialist United States. At the same time, though, he heavily relied upon the sales and capital from the United States that

2. *Peron: 1949 Achievements Exceed Plans*, Daily Report: References to Argentine Affairs (Buenos Aires, Argentina, January 3, 1950), A3, Foreign Broadcast Information Service.

increased Argentina's dependence. Secondly, while Perón spoke of liberation of Argentine mentalities, he simultaneously stopped the voices of opposition in the press through government takeover of *La Prensa* and *Clarín*. This curtailed the freedom of the press.

Perón also attempted to liberate Argentina from the Cold War polarity of the United States against the Soviet Union. While these were noble goals that Perón attempted to achieve, his economic policies failed to liberate Argentina in 1950. By the end of 1950, Argentina was even more closely aligned with the United States economic sphere. The reality was that a more foreign influence in Argentina started in 1950 due to lower economic returns.³

The increase in foreign investment in Argentina came at a high internal price. Perón's radio domination gave an official mouthpiece to address economic problems, but this was not enough. Through the Argentine senate investigatory commission, led by Senator Visca, the witch-hunt committee attacked any anti-Argentine factions operating within the country. The Visca committee attacked the only Peronist opposition newspapers, *La Prensa*, *La Nacion*, and *Clarín*. The Argentine government used the radio as an attack dog to bring all three newspapers' reputations down and increase the visibility of their anti-Peronist activities.

Economic Problems

The late 1940s wave of economic prosperity quickly receded into economic doldrums. The Argentine economy in 1950 demonstrated problems of heavy government intervention through high inflation and international market turmoil. The importance of the international market for farm products was central to how Perón built his economic house of

3. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo: La Comunidad Organizada (1950-1952)*, 2nd:75; Rock, *Argentina, 1516-1982: From Spanish Colonization to the Falklands War*, 242. The United States's Standard Oil was the primary company at the heart of the Argentina controversy.

cards. The Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) program that Perón had heavily championed was falling apart; in fact, it had never taken off, as theorized by Rostow. This failure occurred because Perón neglected Argentina's traditional economic strengths: the agrarian and ranching sectors. Unemployment rose; and at the same time, real wages fell by approximately twenty percent between 1948 and 1952 as these were the key post war boom years.⁴ Beginning in 1950, the rise of the cost of living meant that the economic strength of the lower classes started to wane. Coupled with growing unemployment, the Peronist government cut food subsidies, which increased the cost of food and living.⁵ The emerging middle class that owned and operated businesses also felt the crunch of government regulations by mandating prices. To relieve tensions, Perón had to change his rhetorical stance from a focus on the lower classes to one that highlighted the community, demonstrating these emerging classes had a place within *Justicialista* culture.

In 1950, the Peronist political party published several books that featured lectures and ideas of the leader as a means of propaganda. Perón focused his rhetoric on the idea of the "Twenty Truths" of *Justicialismo*. Tenets of the new philosophy were aphorisms such as, "True democracy is when the Government does what the people want and defends one interest alone: the People."⁶ Such political philosophical statements were not only empty and meaningless rhetoric; they also had no real application in Perón's government in 1950. The need to change focus from unions and work towards grand philosophical ideas demonstrates the economic emphasis within the Peronist government to control the political message against lower class and real world reality.

4. Rock, *Argentina*, 301. Milanesio, *Workers Go Shopping in Argentina*, 150. The urban population in the 1940s had benefited from the low rent prices and higher wages under Perón.

5. Rock, *Argentina*, 301. The reason for the cut in food subsidies was to increase the export of farm products.

6. *Ibid.*, 304.

Another aspect of Peronism that slowly changed in 1950 was rhetoric involving the United States. One of the central ideas of Perón's Third Position was the non-alignment of Argentina to both the United States and the U.S.S.R.⁷ Another factor for the non-alignment movement was the nationalist sentiment inside the country. Frequently throughout the 1940s, Perón used the United States as a boogiemán to rally Argentines to his political causes. While the United States was one of the largest international competitors, it was also one of the largest buyers of Argentine products.⁸ Argentina took international loans from the United States to help offset domestic and international debt.⁹ The key product that Argentines wanted was steel to manufacture industrial goods.¹⁰

7. While the focus of this study is on The United States-Argentine relationship, there was a significant development in the British diplomacy during this period as well. Miguel Miranda secured several large contracts with the British, but the problem was the post-World War II British economics left little money for foreign investment. To pay for beef purchases during World War II, England issued IOUs to be paid in the future. In 1949, Argentina nationalized British owned railroads for several reasons. The reason for primarily keeping these events from the narrative is because England was in United State's sphere of economic, political, and military influence and thus a secondary player in international events in Argentina.

8. Rock, *Argentina*, 293; *Dutch-Argentine Trade*, Daily Report: Briefs, Benelux (Hilversum: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, July 24, 1950), VV2, Foreign Broadcast Information Service. Rock stated, "Perón had failed into a trap. Under the Marshall Plan Argentina's export sales totaled a mere \$21 million, only 3 percent of the total food goods bought by the Europeans, while American grain exports in the early 1950s were eight times greater than prewar sales." Argentina traded with other Western bloc nations, but not to with the same relationship that was with the United States. The report mentions that the Dutch traded Argentines with cable, tools, radio, steel, glass, and machinery. The fact that the Argentines traded with the Dutch is of note, because of limited secondary notes about the two country's previous trade relationship.

9. Rock, *Argentina*, 301; *Perón Asked to Explain Loan From U.S.*, Daily Report: Briefs, Argentina (Santiago: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, May 28, 1950), A1, Foreign Broadcast Information Service. Anti-Peronists were very interested in the loan, questioning how Perón would pay for these measures. The total that Argentine's owed to the United States was approximately \$245 million and a \$125 million loan.

10. *Radio Import Facilities*, Daily Report: Briefs, Argentina (Buenos Aires, Argentina: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, November 1, 1950), A4, Foreign Broadcast Information Service. The report stated that Argentina gained approximately 107,101 tons total. The Belgium government provided 59 percent of the rail and equipment.

The Visca Commission and Newspapers Attacks

In late 1949, Emilio Visca created a bicameral commission to investigate the torture of Union Civica Radical (UCR) members by pro-Peronists.¹¹ The commission quickly changed course to focus on media investigations about “anti-Argentine” activities. The commission’s goals turned into a witch-hunt to purify the Argentine press and succeeded in bringing the three major newspapers, *La Prensa*, *La Nación*, and *Clarín*, into Perón’s power.¹²

One of the major problems of newspapers was a paper shortage due to World War II. Historians discredit the degree of severity of the paper shortage, contending that the crisis was manufactured to put pressure on newspapers to stop printing critical editorials of the commission.¹³ Many newspapers attempted to continue publishing daily by only decreasing the number of pages. The incorporation of newspapers had a variety of consequences, from foreign policy to internal power structures. The radio networks’ part in the commission was as a bully pulpit for pro-Peronists to advocate for the shutdown of newspapers.

11. Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación*, 138.

12. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 2nd: 18. The Visca Commission opened 1950 with the announcement of their recommendation of the closure of several newspapers throughout Argentina. Armed with new political laws, such as Ley 13.569, Ley 13.985 and 13.945, the Visca Commission could impose severe sentences to anyone that offended the dignity of public officials, espionage, sabotage and treason that included dissemination of economic, political, military, financial and industrial information that was not intended for publication. The Visca Commission had unlimited power to investigate and punish “anti-Argentine” activities. In February, the Visca Commission began targeting newspapers like *La Prensa* and *Clarín*. Ley 13.569, Ley 13.985 and 13.945 were all laws passed that gave the Visca Commission extra teeth to exact punishment to anti-Argentines. All these laws were very vaguely defined in their use of terms. In January, the recommendation of newspaper closures was political because Moises Lebensohn ran two of the newspapers--Impartial Coronel Suarez and Democracia. Lebensohn was a member of the lower Argentine house and a political opponent due to his affiliation with the UCR party.

13. Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación*, 145. Sirvén stated through the IAPI, not individual newspaper sources, created the crisis due to the commission recommendations that paper has to be purchased from abroad.

The newspaper *La Prensa* depicted the attack from the Visca Commission as the removal of freedom of the press in Argentina. After the Visca Commission ordered the closure of close to fifty newspapers, *La Prensa* denounced the committee's findings as having no constitutional power to suppress freedom of the press.¹⁴ Later, in May of 1950, *La Prensa* continued their attack by linking Perón's tactics to Nazis and stating that commentaries should not have to be fixed for newspapers and radio stations.¹⁵ By June, Representative Decker, of the Visca Commission, openly attacked *La Prensa* for disturbing the tranquility of the Republic.¹⁶ *La Prensa's* editors understood that radio was the primary method of communication between Perón and voters. After the Visca attacks, newspapers started to question the role of radio as the medium for political address. Editorials in *La Prensa* denounced whether Apold or Perón was attacking newspapers on radio addresses.¹⁷

LRA Radio Nacional became the primary voice that created the narrative of newspapers as anti-Argentine within the country. Raúl Apold used the radio to attack newspapers. One example was that newspapers should only report the news, not exaggerate through editorials.¹⁸ LRA Radio Nacional attacked *La Prensa* and equated the newspaper to a voice of imperial control to the Argentine colony from abroad.¹⁹ The rhetoric of the "Year of the Liberator San Martín" gave Perón the image of Argentine liberation from imperial

14. *La Prensa Condemns Ban on Newspapers*, Daily Report: References to Argentine Affairs (San Jose: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, January 12, 1950), A1, Foreign Broadcast Information Service.

15. *Restriction of Press and Radio Decried*, Daily Report: Briefs, Argentina (Santiago: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, May 28, 1950), A1, Foreign Broadcast Information Service. There are two key points of this report: first that the report was made from radio stations in Chile, the radio medium played a part in spreading news of the problems in Argentine press; secondly, that newspapers were first and radio second, again emphasizing the idea that newspapers were the main source of upper-class news and radio was a distant second.

16. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 2nd: 17.

17. Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación*, 156.

18. *Ibid.*, 156 & 329. While Apold used film as his central media choice, radio came in a close second. In a 1953 document, Apold stated that Radio was the best instrument to reach into people's homes as a form of propaganda. The report went on to state that radio programs were perfect vehicles for propaganda into people's lives. The radio increased starting in 1950, whereas newspapers decreased by 50%.

19. *Ibid.*, 156.

powers. The idea of foreign control of *La Prensa* meant that Perón had a sacred duty to liberate Argentina from outside control. LRA Radio Nacional's attacks on *La Prensa* garnered the attention of congressional leaders, who drafted declarations that the executive should stop the radio attacks of newspapers.²⁰

On the other hand, radio stations such as Radio Belgrano were a target for the Visca Commission. Since 1949, Radio Belgrano played an American news and cultural program called the "American Meridian," that drew the commission's attention.²¹ In the summer of 1950, the Visca Commission ordered the intervention of Radio Belgrano in Buenos Aires and Santa Fe that shut down these station's programming for a few days.²²

The Visca Commission was very important to how Perón used the radio in the 1950s. The major result of the Visca Commission was the incorporation of *La Prensa* into the Peronist propaganda machine in 1951.²³ The lack of voices of opposition in the media meant the news narrative did not have to conform to reality. The incorporation of all major newspapers, plus radio networks from the 1940s, meant that Perón completely dominated the media landscape in Argentina. The use of radio by the Peronist government demonstrates its

20. Ibid., 156–157. Sirvén stated that Justo Pastor Reinaldo Diaz Colodrero said of *La Prensa*, "does not belong to any political party and has judged severely impartiality all governments that passed through the Republic, it is attacked violently daily by an official speaker in a position that clearly foreshadows inadmissible measures ravage this prestigious rostrum of Argentine thought." It should be noted that the language that the UCR members of congress used had more effect in newspapers than on radio.

21. Edward A. Morrow, "Argentina Blocks 2 U.S. Radio Shows: Embassy's News and Cultural Programs Forced Off Air-Military Mission to Leave," *New York Times*, August 30, 1952, 16.

22. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 2nd: 15–16.

23. Ibid., 2nd:28, 32–33; *Eva Perón to Help La Prensa Workers*, Daily Report: Briefs, Argentina (Buenos Aires, Argentina: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, June 8, 1951), A1, Foreign Broadcast Information Service. *Clarín* and *La Nación* were the first in January to integrate into government control. By March, *La Prensa* fell to Peronist attacks. After a particularly virulent attack, Peronist bombed *La Prensa*. Afterward, the La Paz family decided to sell the company to the government. Many foreign observers criticized the integration of newspapers as the first steps towards German and Italian fascism through limitations on freedom of the press. After the sale of the newspapers to the government, they became propaganda machines for the administration. The integration of newspapers was a major policy initiative by the Perón administration. Many historians credit Eva Perón as the epicenter of the newspaper policy initiatives. Through public speeches and demonstrations of support for the workers, Eva Perón demonstrated her political power in the press. Through the Eva Perón Foundation, almost four million pesos went to workers affected by the closure of the *La Prensa*.

reliance on it to create political narratives. The radio targeted not political opponents, but other media. The winner in the fight between newspapers and radio was the Peronist government. By incorporating the papers, Perón expanded his reach and silence opposition inside of Argentina. Because oppositional voices were not allowed access to either radio or newspapers, political narratives were not tied to the contours of reality. While the Visca Commission had negative effects on Argentine international standing, internal radio markets increased and flexed political muscles in 1950.

The Radio as a Form of Consumption

The radio played an integral part in the way Perón communicated both in Argentina and abroad. One of the policy goals that Perón had was to create a union of South American countries functioning together as an economic bloc against both the United States and the Soviet Union. Perón's Argentina was a clear example of the post-World War II nonalignment movements in the Third World. The radio was an instrument to expand Argentina's economy through advertisements in neighboring countries, create a common unity through programs, and establish relationships throughout South America.

The rhetoric that Perón used on the radio in 1950 used nationalist images, especially that of independence hero San Martín. Radio stations had to announce that this was “Broadcasting in the Year of the Liberator Gen. San Martín’ after their daily station identification.”²⁴ This daily ritual linked Perón and the nationalist symbol on the radio.²⁵

24. *Radio Stations to Honor San Martin*, Daily Report: References to Argentine Affairs (Buenos Aires, Argentina: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, February 2, 1950), A2, Foreign Broadcast Information Service.

25. *Plotkin, Manaña Es San Perón*. Plotkin placed a great emphasis on rituals and Peronism. The biggest ritual was October 17, but other rituals gave Perón power in the population. Through daily announcements, Perón could reinforce that he was in control of Argentina, thus linking in the listener's mind the power of Perón.

Other radio rituals included the broadcast of the Peronist October 17th celebration and similar patriotic remembrances.²⁶

Even in very tough economic times, the Perónist government expanded radio stations inside Argentina. The importation of radio equipment was of high priority in 1950; many international trades focused on the importation of radio equipment.²⁷ Foreign industrial goods were at a premium because of international trade costs, which meant that any purchase of radio equipment was especially valuable to the Peronist government. On July 10, Perón confirmed previous commitments to expand LRA Radio Nacional throughout Argentina, thus setting the network as a priority for the Argentine government.²⁸

The second type of radio expansion was international, focusing on the increase of Argentine trade and power in South America. In 1949, Perón announced the project SIRA (Servicio Internacional Radiofónico Argentino), a program to extend Argentine radio.²⁹ For example, the state oil company, YPF ("Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales") advertised on

26. *Radio Lectures*, Daily Report: References to Argentine Affairs (Buenos Aires, Argentina: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, October 10, 1950), A1, Foreign Broadcast Information Service.

27. *Radio Import Facilities*, A4. The importation of radio equipment became duty free in Argentina, demonstrating two key factors: first, that Perón wanted the radio stations quickly and without any delaying problems that customs and taxes would have engendered; second, that the Government bought these materials, and taxation on materials that were bought by the government is redundant. It should also be noted that while radio expansion was key during the 1950-1951 time period, a secondary focus of the incorporation of television into Argentina as a new media was also a central goal of the Peronist government.

28. Ulanovsky, *La Radio Nacional*, 85. "Perón Network: First Link Inaugurated," *Broadcasting*, July 31, 1950, 70, American Radio History. Perón told the daily newspaper *Él Líder*, "the State Radio coverage will be in La Pampa, Neuquén, Western and Central Buenos Aires, Southern of Santa Fe, Córdoba, San Luis, Mendoza, Northern and Central Rio Negro." This list of new radio stations demonstrate the expansion, particularly in the southern cone part of Argentina, for Perón to incorporate new groups of people into Justicialismo culture. Perón opened new radio stations in Tucuman in honor of San Martín, again linking Perón to San Martín through the radio. The opening of radio stations in the La Pampa through the LRA Radio Nacional system was another method that Perón used to link voters to his political agenda in the interior.

29. Herbert M. Clark, "Perón Regime: Argentina's Largest Broadcaster," *Broadcasting*, August 28, 1950, 21, American Radio History. Perón also expanded radio through outright ownership of radio stations outside of Argentina. Before the integration of Radio Belgrano in 1947, Jaime Yankelevich owned three stations, two in Paraguay and one in Uruguay. In 1950, Herbert M. Clark, a United States radio journalist, reported that Perón owned two stations in Paraguay and one in Uruguay. While it is unclear if the radio stations in question were the three that Yankelevich owned in the late 1940s, it is important to note that Perón had control of the radio stations as late as 1950.

state radio; thus, when foreign consumers listened to Argentine radio stations, they would be more likely to purchase Argentine oil products.³⁰ Perón also used the radio to expand *Justicialismo* culture into other countries. During the October 17th celebrations, Perón sent greetings of good will and friendship to all the nations of the world. “For this special medium, the truth and the Argentine culture found every day shall find new resonances in new corners of the Earth.”³¹ Cloaked in nationalist language, Perón wanted to spread his *Justicialista* culture to other countries to increase trade and bring other powers into Argentina’s sphere of influence. The expansion of LRA Radio Nacional demonstrates that Perón wanted to expand his power and economic influence through *Justicialismo* culture on the radio.

Radio culture and programming during 1950 changed slightly to reflect the changes that occurred with the Visca Commission. On January 10, 1950, regulations passed that approximately fifty percent of music programming on radio stations had to be Argentine music.³² The change reflects the nationalist focus of the Visca Commission away from the “anti-Argentine” music. The Visca Commission banned the radio program, *Preguntas y Respuestas* (Questions and Answers) because on the show one contestant stated, “I donate to commit to help the political prisoners of the Socialist Party.”³³ The term donation was a political phrase that denoted the Eva Perón Foundation, thus showing the contestant’s link to

30. Clark, “Argentine Radio Time Is 98% Commercial,” 208. While this article is from 1947, the fact that the YPF sponsored Teatro Colon’s productions then does not necessarily mean that they stopped in 1950.

31. Ulanovsky, *La Radio Nacional*, 81, 85. One country he targeted in particular was the United States with broadcasts in English.

32. *Ibid.*, 81.

33. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 2nd: 19. It should be noted that the Evita Perón Foundation had grown in power and prestige in the last few years. The mission of the foundation was social justice. One example of the power of the Evita Perón Foundation was Ley 13.982, which took a percentage of wages from all Argentines to give directly to the Foundation as a donation. The image of the Evita Perón Foundation as social help increased the political power of the foundation, while simultaneously creating a problem with anti-Perónists due to forced contributions. Another call to arms was made for individuals who did not support Perón to fight the administration.

both the foundation and socialism. The Peronist government interpreted the answer as a political attack directed at the charity organization.³⁴ Radio shows also expanded melodrama content in 1951, with stories about upper against lower classes.³⁵ These programs on LRA Radio Nacional point to the continued use of melodrama as a proselytizing agent for Perón. Radio served as a tool to promote economic initiatives, like installation of pipelines for oil extraction.³⁶ While radio programs promoted the traditional narratives of melodrama, radio as consumption of both products and media grew in 1950.

Radio grew from approximately 1,500,000 receivers in 1949, to approximately 2,838,000 in 1955.³⁷ In one testimonial about the Perón administration's outreach to the underclass, a woman openly thanked the president for radio as the first gift that Perón had given her.³⁸ The testimony of the working class demonstrates how they saw the radio as a gift, not as a propaganda tool used by Perón. The ability to purchase a radio equated with rising economic success and power. The view of the working class was contradictory to the view of the Peronist government in regards to radio as a form of propaganda to proselytize voters into the Peronist political agenda.³⁹ Radio shows and advertisements from 1950 to 1955 focused on women as consumers.⁴⁰

34. Ibid. Luna stated that the idea of donations were linked to the Eva Perón Foundation, and the actions of the contestant were atrocious. The second problem with the contestant's answer was that the contestant supported the Socialist party, of which Perón was against and United States sponsors would have greatly shunned

35. LRA Radio Nacional shows like *Las dos cardinals*, *Él teatro de la humanidad* are a prime example of melodrama in the 1950s.

36. Ulanovsky, *La Radio Nacional*, 82.

37. Banks, *Cross-National Time Series, 1815-1973*. Yet, these numbers are very fluid, McCann stated that there were close to 1,500,000 radio sets in Argentina in 1946, while Charles C Dudley of the J. Walter Thomas Co. stated that Argentina had 1,300,000 in 1946. So, basically the numbers are uncertain.

38. Milanesio, *Workers Go Shopping in Argentina*, 200. Milanesio found this testimonial from a pro-Peronist newspaper Mundo Peronista about "happy" textile worker Aída Rojas.

39. Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo*, 330–333. In 1953, Apold wrote a document that stated that radios were the best way to incorporate individuals into the regime, both through news and radio programs.

40. Milanesio, *Workers Go Shopping in Argentina*, 71, 102. Milansio never stated that radio advertisements and shows were the primary avenue of disseminating information to female consumers, her

Women's role in Argentine politics and economics grew considerably under the Peronist government because of Eva Duarte's political advocacy and rising visibility in the public sphere. Economically, women did the majority of the shopping; approximately 80 to 85 percent of all items consumed were by women.⁴¹ The other advancements of women included participation in government.⁴² Yet, on radio and mass media, there was no change in how women appeared in advertisements and radio shows.⁴³ One way to reach women through radio was to inform them as mothers with shows like *Defending the Family in the New Constitution*.⁴⁴ Reaching out to women as consumers for family was another method of promoting of women's issues in the *Justicialismo* culture while simultaneously keeping women in traditional familial roles.

The year 1950's proclamation as the "Year of the Liberator" demonstrates key problems within the government. Perón desperately needed his ISI program to "take off", yet the constant struggle between rural and urban sectors, coupled with international tensions resulted in Argentina's economic slowdown. International commentators on the economic situation in Argentina stated, "Despite Perón's Propaganda, proclaiming that Argentina is in an excellent situation, will not be much aid to the country. The truth is that Argentina is going through a difficult situation and the standard of living in the country is already

argument focused primarily on the role newspapers played in creating consumer culture. Yet, taking shows from the 1950s targeted to female audiences, Milanese's argument can be extended to radio.

41. Milanese, *Workers Go Shopping in Argentina*, 71.

42. Maria del Carmen Feijoo, Marcela M. A. Nari, and Luis A. Fierro, "Women in Argentina during the 1960s," *Latin American Perspectives* 23, no. 1 (January 1, 1996): 19.

43. Ulanovsky, *La Radio Nacional*, 83; Ulanovsky et al., *Días de Radio*. The ads that Ulanovsky used feature women as smart taking notes, yet she is interested in dancing. The image promotes women as intellectual, yet at the same time interested in non important things like dances and socials. The image keeps women in traditional place, outside of the intellectual sphere of men.

44. Ulanovsky, *La Radio Nacional*, 82. Shows like *The State and Education*, *The Economic Value of Pipeline* and programs about parks all promoted state economic initiatives yet they were couched in consumer friendly packages that did not seem like propaganda.

beginning to decline.”⁴⁵ The added tensions of the Visca Commission meant that international pressure for freedom of the press aggravated international economic problems. The attacks on daily newspapers *La Prensa* and *Clarín* contributed to the slow incorporation of both newspapers into the Peronist government in 1951.

1951: Changing Media Landscape

By the end of 1951, there were three forms of mass media communication: television, radio, and newspapers. Even though the television was present in Argentina, it does not mean that radio had lost its importance. The process of presidential campaigning throughout Argentina was predominantly on the radio. The year 1951 marks a dramatic shift in how Perón approached mass media communications. By year’s end, the radio played an increasing role of propaganda for the Peronist government.

Radio in 1951

While television changed the media landscape, the radio’s role changed to a vehicle of propaganda in 1951. The proposed slogan for LRA Radio Nacional was, “Serving the People’s culture,” meaning *Justicialismo* culture.⁴⁶ Perón stated that Argentina had the most remarkable broadcasting system in South America due to the achievements of his First Five Year Plan. He went on to state that radio continued, “To strengthen the independence and firm sovereignty” of Argentina.⁴⁷ This statement was made in an election year,

45. “Living Standards Reported on Decline,” *Rio de Janeiro*, January 1, 1950, A1, Foreign Broadcast Information Service.

46. Ulanovsky, *La Radio Nacional*, 89; Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación*, 182. Sirvén stated that there were currently over two thousand speeches by the Secretary of Information that were broadcast on the radio.

47. Ulanovsky, *La Radio Nacional*, 89.

demonstrating radio's progress under his administration and subliminally linking Perón with Argentina's modern state.

By 1951, radio programs and content remained stable through the end of the Peronist era.⁴⁸ Radio stations that did not follow strict rules of government regulations, such as devoting fifty percent of airtime to nationalistic music, closed for a brief period.⁴⁹ Actors and actresses frequented the office of the Secretary for Information to promote the official agenda.⁵⁰ Famous tango lyricist Enrique Santos Discépolo, who wrote "Cambalanche," gave radio speeches about contemporary Argentina. These lectures featured Discépolo and an alter ego "Mordisquito." Throughout the dialogue, Discépolo made critical pro-Peronist observations while "Mordisquito," the anti-Peronist, did not respond.⁵¹ The link between

48. *Broadcasting Stations of the World: According to Country and City*, 11th ed. (Washington D.C.: Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service War Department, 1952), 12–15; Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 2nd: 247. One small change in name ownership of radio stations occurred in 1951: Radio Belgrano changed ownership to Promotores Asociacion De Teleradiodifusors S.A; Radio El Mundo changed ownership to *La Razon*; and Radio Splendid changed to Editorial Haynes LTD S.A. The change in ownership to company titles demonstrates the influence of United States capitalists, who wanted to see companies in control of media. Radio might have changed ownership names, the Peronist control of radio stations did not change. The sale of radio networks went primarily in the hands of Peronist supporters. For example, Jorge Antonio was an avid Peronist who rose from hospital orderly to own Radio Belgrano. Antonio had no previous experience running and owning radio stations, yet his unwavering support of Perón gave Antonio favor when buying the radio network. A popular daytime show was Luis Sandrini's *Every Home, a World* that gave advice on how to manage households and gave lectures on food cultivation and preparation. Luna further states that the show gave advice about how food was linked to the formation of the Argentine race, to prevent stunted or diseased kidney's excessive consumption of beef was the advice. Contained in the advice was the propaganda that supported Argentina's traditional export, cattle.

49. Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación*, 182; Karush, *Culture of Class*. Radio stations in Baja, Palermo, and San Isidro were all closed down for a short time. Karush stated that in the 1950s the Tango was static and did not change from the 1940s. An explanation for this was the state regulations and daytime programs. While prime time radio drew in the most listeners, the daytime radio created cultural stars of their own. Most of the music performed on the radio occurred in the daytime hours. The music on radio broadcasts was primarily from four orchestras, the Carlos Di Sarli, Anibal Troilo, Osvaldo Ricardo, and Tanturi Fresedo orchestras that performed in the daytime.

50. Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación*, 182. Were the actors and actresses searching for lines of propaganda, or simply following the path that Evita had set to gain recognition that could skyrocket their political and economic fortunes? This is not clear in the secondary literature, but should be considered a factor.

51. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 2nd: 185; Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación*, 181. First, it is not clear when the Mordisquito show started, but was mentioned in 1951 radio shows by Sirvén as performed in 1951. Luna stated that he did not like the fact that Mordisquito because the "game was uneven" and the character was always able to win. It is interesting that Discépolo was attracted to Peronism due to the anti-

tango lyricists and Perón demonstrates that Perón had effectively been a part of the tango community. Historian Daniel James argued that Perón integrated tango lyrics and language to incorporate urban culture into his political agenda. Perón's use of Discépolo is a clear example of James' argument. Discépolo's statements on the radio were equivalent to Perón saying them, but the fact that Discépolo had cultural weight gave the propaganda more power.⁵² The show "Mordisquito" mirrored the lack of oppositional voices on the radio. The star power of Discépolo meant that the propaganda drew in a large audience in the evening programs.

The activities of the Visca Commission had a direct impact on the radio in 1951 through the BBC service broadcast ban. On March 22, 1951, a BBC news program was critical of the Perón administration's activities regarding *La Prensa*.⁵³ In response, the Argentine government shut down all foreign radio transmissions. The real problem was that the BBC broadcast demonstrated that the propaganda that Perón used to incorporate *La Prensa* was not shared outside of Argentina, and the introduction of another narrative undermined Perón's political authority. The Peronist government could justify the closure of the BBC broadcasts through the idea that it was a foreign interventionist group attempting to undermine Peronist authority inside Argentina by spreading rumors.⁵⁴ The government closed down the rebroadcasting radio stations for a few days and added a new amendment to

governmental lyrics of his most famous tango Cambalache. The use of such a profound lyricist to promote Peronism demonstrates the use of star power to sell the Peronist agenda to the radio population.

52. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 2nd: 184. Luna stated that the speeches from Discépolo was like reiterating Perónist official propaganda but in a more friendly, non-threatening way.

53. *Radio Ban*, Daily Report: Briefs, Argentina (Santiago: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, March 30, 1951), A1, Foreign Broadcast Information Service. The article cited that the BBC was rebroadcast in Buenos Aires. This needs further explanation that is not given by the document, Editorial Haynes network El Mundo in the 1940s regularly rebroadcast BBC programming throughout Argentina.

54. Herbert M. Clark, "Peron-Style Video to Bow: Like Radio, TV Will Be a Peronista Mouthpiece," *Broadcasting*, October 15, 1951, 28, American Radio History. Clark stated that it was not only British and American radio stations that were targeted, but Venezuela and Peruvian stations were also condemned by the Peronist lash out against the BBC.

the Manual for Radio Broadcasting Stations (*Manual de Instrucciones para las Estaciones de Radiodifusión*) stating that stations that sold time to foreign governments and institutions have to have guarantees of reciprocity of programming time and costs in foreign markets.⁵⁵

Radio programs that further defined *Justicialismo* culture continued in 1951. LRA Radio Nacional created programs that furthered Argentine literature, folk literature, philosophy, and programs for the “friends who work the Argentine soil.”⁵⁶ The radio also played urban interest programs, such as “Mordisquito.” Perón continued the urban/rural link through radio that had contributed to his rise to power in 1946.

The Presidential Campaign on the Radio

The 1951 presidential election was the first national election since Perón had gained control of all forms of mass media communication. The two major parties were the UCR Radical Party and the Peronist party.⁵⁷ Ricardo Balbín, a former lawyer who Perón had arrested in the late 1940s for his political dissent, led the Radical Party. The other Radical Party leader was Frondizi, a congressional leader who became the UCR’s vice-presidential nominee.⁵⁸ On January 2, 1951, Perón released Balbín from prison, due to political pressure from the oppositional party. The Radical Party celebrated the release with hundreds marching in Buenos Aires. The next morning the headlines in the newspapers read, “Perón forgave

55. Ibid.; Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación*, 190–191. In the middle of 1951, the Under Secretary of Broadcast was created to create propaganda for international markets around Argentina. One country of interest was Chile.

56. Ulanovsky, *La Radio Nacional*, 89–90.

57. The previous parties, Union Civica Radical, the Socialist, Communist, and Democratic Nationalist, all played a distinct role in the presidential campaign, yet, for clarity, the narrative will focus only on the Radical Party and the Peronist Party.

58. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 2nd: 191–192. Luna stated that at the National Convention the Radical Party was divided between Balbín and Frondizi. Only after a few rounds of voting did the presidential ticket become solidified.

Balbín.”⁵⁹ The release of Balbín demonstrates how Perón used the media to change the political narrative. Instead of Balbín’s release, the headline gave Perón the agency in granting forgiveness to Balbín, a clever public relations turn to take the narrative attention from Balbín and instead place the focus back on Perón.

Traditionally, the Radical Party turned to newspapers, specifically *La Prensa*, as the central line of communication with voters. With the closure of *La Prensa*, the UCR looked to the radio to present their case to Argentine voters. To get on the radio, one had to ask permission from Perón. Frondizi led the charge to open radio to oppositional voices, stating, “Only the Peronista Party is campaigning over Radio del Estado (LRA Radio Nacional) in favor of Peron’s reelection.”⁶⁰ The fact that the UCR asked for more radio time demonstrates that they understood the power of radio as a form of political communication.⁶¹

Transversely, the Perónist government used radio effectively against the Radical Party. Both Balbín and Frondizi were used to speaking on the radio and had voices that sounded comfortable on the media. Yet the Peronist LRA Radio Nacional openly mocked Balbín’s vocal style by the nickname “Blablín” to denote that he blabbed on the radio instead of speaking clearly.⁶² Other political jabs denounced the pair as *Bradenistas*, harkening back to the United States’ ambassador Braden. With the loss of the newspapers, the Radical Party

59. *Ibid.*, 2nd:27.

60. *UCR Asks Radio Time*, Daily Report: Briefs, Argentina (Santiago: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, August 17, 1951), A1, Foreign Broadcast Information Service; *Request For Radio Time*, Daily Report: Briefs, Argentina (Santiago: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, October 10, 1951), A1, Foreign Broadcast Information Service. Not only the UCR but also the Progressive Democratic Party asked for more radio time to connect to voters.

61. Herbert M. Clark, “Peron-Style Video to Bow: Like Radio, TV Will Be a Peronista Mouthpiece,” 28. Clark went on to state that when the government restricted radio time, they cut the UCR’s ability to communicate with voters all together. Newspapers were gone, and the UCR could not buy billboards to advertise because the government controlled the paper and there was not enough paper stocks to go around.

62. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 2nd: 219–220.

did not have the traditional media outlet to reach voters.⁶³ This demonstrates that the Peronist government had a well thought out and designed policy to use media for political ends.

The Peronist voter outreach changed the way the party used the liaison Eva Perón since the last campaign. By 1951, Eva was slowly dying of cancer and was very sick. Despite Eva's illness, she proceeded to be a major force in Perón's administration and campaign. Voters clamored to see Eva Perón as the first female vice-president in the nation's history, so from the working classes emerged the idea of "Perón y Perón." Pressure continued to swell until August 1951, when Eva announced that she was withdrawing her name as a nominee.⁶⁴ The divisions within the Peronist coalition pulled away from Eva's nomination and the army voiced a specific objection to Eva as vice-president. While the official reason was her unprepared qualities if needed to step into the presidency, an underlying factor was fear of a female in power.⁶⁵ The division between military and Peronist demonstrated an early fragmentation within the Peronist coalition. On November 8, 1951, Eva made another political statement that connected her and her supporters to Perón, "No vote for Perón is betraying the Country."⁶⁶ Eva's statement demonstrates the visceral attacks pro-Peronists

63. Ibid., 2nd: 20, 219–220, 253, 257. Luna stated that the Socialist Party, led by Américo Ghioldi was one of the other major parties in Argentina attempting to gain political power and use of the radio. The Socialist Party traditionally used the newspaper *La Vanguardia* to connect with voters. The Visca Commission targeted the newspaper as a political enemy and closed it in 1950. One of the key episodes Luna described was the Socialist Party and relationship to the radio with the story that a reporter interviewed Perón. Perón claimed that the Socialist Party representative Dr. Enrique Dickmann had requested the release of political prisoners and laborers from Villa Devoto and ordered the reopening of the workshops of *La Vanguardia*. Perón granted Dickmann's requests and the news story was reported throughout Argentina. The problem was the reporter was Borlenghi, a minister in Perón's government, thus the news story was written to lessen the emphasis and power of the Socialist Party and highlight the glory of Perón.

64. *Eva Perón Message*, Daily Report: Briefs, Argentina (Buenos Aires, Argentina: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, September 20, 1951), A1, Foreign Broadcast Information Service. Even though Eva renounced her claim as Perón's vice-president, her picture and name were on ballots throughout the country, alongside Perón's. Eva continued to play the political liaison between voters and Perón, even in an unofficial capacity.

65. *Opposition to Evita*, Daily Report: Briefs, Argentina (Santiago: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, August 13, 1951), A2, Foreign Broadcast Information Service; *Eva Perón Message*, A1.

66. Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo*, 181.

used on the radio as well as that they still were employing the radio for political ends. What gave Eva's statement such power was the fact that she was on her sick bed, and it was only a few days before the election.

The political rhetoric that Perón used in the 1951 presidential campaign first demonstrates the shift in his political language. The first presidential campaign of 1945-1946 had focused on workers' rights and needs, reform tailored to each specific audience, and combating foreign influence.⁶⁷ The 1951 Peronist presidential campaign changed tactics to focus on women as a potential voting bloc. The women's wing of the Peronist party formed since the first presidential election.⁶⁸ The spotlight that was on Eva in 1951 also gave voice to women and women's issues. The Peronist party actively sought female political participation through rallies, expansion of Peronista voting headquarters, and voter drives.⁶⁹ One of the key changes in Perón's rhetoric was to abandon the use of "leader," as his preference was to employ the term *caudillo* or driver.⁷⁰ Leader associated with the oligarchy, whereas *caudillo* also meant leader but was a nationalist symbol.⁷¹ A political problem with Perón's message following the presidential election was his approach to the opposition. In a statement to other parties, Perón declared, "Now we take things seriously. May God have

67. *Perón Election Campaign*, Daily Report: Briefs, Argentina (Buenos Aires, Argentina: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, September 25, 1951), A1, Foreign Broadcast Information Service. The timing of this speech right after the Eva Perón's withdrawal from the vice presidential candidacy demonstrates the political use of both Eva as a liaison and the need to connect to individual voters in the provinces.

68. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 2nd: 118. Luna credits Borlenghi with the statement from mid- February 1951 that "in the general election of 1952, the woman would have the right to choose to be chosen." Borlenghi was a Peronist minister, who demonstrated that women's importance in the 1951 election was determined through political persuasion to incorporate them and use women's issues to gain a political edge.

69. *Peronista Women's Party*, Daily Report: Briefs, Argentina (Buenos Aires, Argentina: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, July 15, 1951), A1, Foreign Broadcast Information Service; *Peronista Women's Party*, Daily Report: Briefs, Argentina (Buenos Aires, Argentina: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, March 10, 1951), A1, Foreign Broadcast Information Service.

70. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 2nd: 206.

71. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*. Usually Caudillos were strong armed leaders who used unsavory political tactics to gain the upper edge. One method was the use of armed thugs to gain intelligence on enemies or simply killing enemies. It is ironic that Perón used this term, when he was simultaneously shooting newspaper printers who printed negative aspects of his regime.

pity on them if they arouse me. I hope that this will not become necessary, but if it happens they will not have to wait five minutes.”⁷² The blunt statement to political opponents demonstrates a clear change in Perón’s approach from political integration to statements of political attacks.

The 1951 presidential election occurred on November 11. Months of radio spots, programs, and newspaper domination clearly gave Perón an advantage. While Perón won the election with a sixty-two percent victory over UCR, the election was gerrymandered for a Perónist victory.⁷³ Districts were redrawn to favor Perón.⁷⁴ Even with the redrawing of electoral maps and heavy use of media as propaganda, Perón did not completely overwhelm. That Perón’s victory was not a landslide indicates just how politically weak he was by 1951.

While Perón easily won, there were problems in his campaign’s ability to create a cohesive political narrative. The integration of television, radio, and newspapers into Perón’s propaganda machine gave him unequal access to voters throughout Argentina. Despite Perón’s gerrymandering election districts and propaganda, however, his political coalition demonstrated signs of internal problems.

Reelection and Two Deaths: 1952

With his electoral victory in 1951, Perón accumulated a large amount of political capital. The significant margin of victory gave Perón a political boost to continue his political programs. The Second Five Year Plan came from the economic need to increase productivity in Argentina and continue the propagation of the *Justicialismo* culture. In 1952, however, the

72. *Chile Radio Reports on Perón Speech*, Daily Report: Argentina (Santiago: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, March 26, 1952), A5, Foreign Broadcast Information Service.

73. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 2nd: 167–168.

74. *Ibid.*, 2nd:169. Specifically the Federal Capital was redrawn from nine districts to over twenty.

deaths of Jaime Yankelevich in February and Eva Perón in July left Perón without two key radio people.

Death of Jaime Yankelevich

On February 25, 1952, Yankelevich, the man many considered to be the innovator of Argentine radio, died. While there was no list of causes, Yankelevich was fifty-eight years old at his death, and there seems to be no foul play in his death.⁷⁵ The Argentine newspaper *La Nación* remembered Yankelevich as a man who understood the psychological power that radio had on crowds.⁷⁶ The pro-Peronist *La Nación* emphasized Yankelevich's understanding of the psychological power of the radio and crowds.⁷⁷

Argentine radio changed drastically after Yankelevich's death. The money that Yankelevich had accumulated was to be divided into state funds. The most uncontroversial parts of the division were to split money to release debts of radio announcers; Radio Belgrano was to be responsible for the debt of the employee trade union, donations to the Communications Club, official gifts to the leaders of the Argentine government, and a loan.⁷⁸ The division of Yankelevich's estate seems more like the government attempting to return their ledger books to black. The more controversial aspects of the government intervention were payments of over \$1.5 million in dividends to Minister of Communications Oscar

75. "Jaime Yankelevich," *New York Times*, February 26, 1952, sec. Obituaries, 27. The New York Times claimed that Yankelevich succumbed to a long battle with illness, without naming the illness.

76. "Don Yankelevich," *La Nacion*, February 26, 1952, 3, Biblioteca del Congreso de la Nación Argentina.

77. "Jamie Yankelevich," *Broadcasting*, March 3, 1952, 33, American Radio History. In Yankelevich's obituaries in the United States, they only remembered Yankelevich's major contribution of finding Eva Perón and television in Argentina. It should be noted that *Broadcasting* magazine wrote exclusively on the Inter-American Broadcasters Association, which Yankelevich was the president of, and also wrote extensively about the corruption that must have occurred to bring Yankelevich back into the Peronist government. It seems odd to have only a short remembrance of such an important man.

78. Noguera, *Radiodifusión en la Argentina*, 63.

Nicolini and \$16 million in the sale of the news organization *Agencia Periodistica Argentina*, that became a propaganda tool of the government.⁷⁹

The importance of Yankelevich's death for radio and Perón was the change in how Perón presented himself on the radio.⁸⁰ In addition, Perón's political messages became more uncoordinated after 1952.⁸¹ After Yankelevich's death, the Peronist government issued documents about radio as a vehicle for propaganda into individuals' homes.⁸² The term propaganda had never appeared before Yankelevich's death. Second, Yankelevich's official title as Director General of Broadcasting meant a radio innovator had been at the helm of radios in Argentina, which gave Perón a face with broadcasters.

The Second Five Year Plan

Soon after his reelection, Perón proposed his Second Five Year Plan. Modeled after the first Five Year Plan, the goals of the plan changed from heavy ISI programs to focus more on rural agrarian production.⁸³ While the Second Five Year Plan had a large scope of

79. Ibid.

80. While there has yet to be any establishment between Yankelevich and Raúl Apold, there does seem to be a correlation with Yankelevich's death and the rise of Apold as head of propaganda in Argentina.

81. While there were clear problems from the 1951 election and political messaging on the radio, these problems were small and insignificant. After 1952, the political messaging on the radio increased, coupled with the rise of radio as a tool of propaganda.

82. Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo*, 323. The Raúl Apold document of 1953 that demonstrates the shift in rhetoric stated each radio stations general programs as propaganda into homes. This was a dramatic shift in political language.

83. *1952 Economic Plan*, Daily Report: Argentina (Buenos Aires, Argentina: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, March 29, 1952), A2, Foreign Broadcast Information Service; Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo*, 210; Rock, *Argentina*, 308. Starting in 1950, the need for foreign corporations, such as Swift, Armour, and Standard Oil, for economic assistance grew. The Second Five Year Plan acknowledged the fact that Perón understood that the domestic Argentine economy could not sustain the ISI growth that was necessary for the Rawson's take off. Mercado noted that after Eva's death that Standard Oil gained a contract to expand oil exploration into Santa Cruz. To facilitate ISI programs Perón established the ATLAS (Agrupación de Trabajadores Latinoamericanos Sindicalistas), an international labor association whose sole purpose was to propagate Justicialismo culture throughout South America and create new markets for Argentine products. ATLAS was to use the expansion of LRA Radio Nacional and other foreign directed broadcasts to generate new revenues for Argentina. The problem was many of the other Latin American nations could not contribute enough funds to propagate Perón's ISI programs, thus he was still in the same boat he was in before 1950.

action, the results were limited due to the contemporary Argentine economic state. The central problem the Second Five Year Plan attempted to change was inflation.⁸⁴ At the heart of the Second Five Year Plan's economic agenda was also the stated attempt to maximize industrial growth with "economic and social equilibrium."⁸⁵ Ultimately, the Second Five Year Plan went against the desires of both rural and urban supporters, yet the plan was supported by many in both areas in Argentina because of the effective use of propaganda.

Support for Perón's Second Five Year Plan resulted from the saturation of mass media communications.⁸⁶ Raúl Apold was in charge of development plans that used communication to support the Second Five Year Plan.⁸⁷ For five days after the launch of the Second Five Year Plan, radio and television devoted several hours of programs to discussion of the benefits of the plan.⁸⁸ Apold continued the media blitz by saturating newspapers with the establishment of the successes of the First Five Year Plan and demonstrations of how the Second Five Year Plan would follow the results of the first.⁸⁹ Public Events, popular

84. Rock, *Argentina*, 307–308. The political pressure to alleviate this problem was a reason many voters reelected Perón for a second term. Another problem for urban voters was the policies for wage stabilization and union contracts for only two years. Some of the key provisions of Perón's plan was the fifty-percent increase in land sown by crops, high priority for tractors, harvesters and fertilizers. All of these measures would increase profits, yet decrease the number of workers on the land, creating another problem in the interior with voters who did not own the land but worked it.

85. *Ibid.*, 307.

86. *Radio L' Opposition*, Daily Report: Briefs, Argentina (Sao Paulo: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, December 16, 1952), A1, Foreign Broadcast Information Service. It should be noted, that not all agreed with the Second Five Year Plan, the Radical Party in the Chamber of Deputies rejected the Five Year Plan. Due to their minority in Congress meant that the measure did not produce anything other than a declaration of the opposition.

87. Eduardo Elena, "What the People Want: State Planning and Political Participation in Peronist Argentina, 1946-1955," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, February 2005, 89, JSTOR. Elena argued that part of the inspiration of the Second Five Year Plan was the program "Perón Wants To Know" campaign where people wrote letters that explained what they wanted in the Second Five Year Plan. Elena pointed out the similarities between letter writing campaign radio stations did in the 1930-40s and the "Perón Wants to Know" campaign.

88. Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación*, 180–183.

89. Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo*, 227–228.

festivals, the Eva Perón Foundation, and sports contests were all avenues that the Peronist government used to gain a political edge in media.⁹⁰

Other aspects of the Second Five Year Plan included the continued expansion of radio and mass media. One of the objectives of the plan was to fulfill the Official Radio Broadcasting Service (*Servicio Oficial de Radiodifusión*), which extended radio throughout Argentina to provide defense and raise the culture of the population through private radio stations with government assistance.⁹¹ The change in government policy meant that the business community helped to offset the costs of implementation of radio stations but was kept firmly under government control.⁹²

The Death of Eva Perón

Eva Duarte Perón was a major force within the Peronist government. While never officially elected to power, she was unofficially the liaison between voters and Perón.⁹³ In 1950, Eva became sick. She underwent several surgeries before the final diagnosis of cervical cancer. Her health declined throughout 1951. On July 26, 1952 Eva Duarte Perón

90. Rock, *Argentina*, 312.

91. Ulanovsky, *La Radio Nacional*, 90; *New Radio Station*, Daily Report: Briefs, Argentina (Buenos Aires, Argentina: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, October 24, 1952), A1, Foreign Broadcast Information Service. The Second Five Year Plan specifically went on to state as goals, “in order to meet the life and culture of the Argentine people, their achievements and contributions to the universal Argentine culture and national doctrine.” The expansion of the network Splendid in La Pampa in 1952 demonstrates the continued effort of the Peronist government to expand political control in Argentina through private investments. The report names LP16 as another radio station in the Argentine Radio Network Splendid.

92. While there is no definitive proof that Yankelevich’s death had any factor in the change of methodology of new radio stations in Argentina. The fact that Yankelevich died, so close to these proclamations, suggests that the government would have continued the previous course of purchasing materials for the state. Yankelevich was known to champion private investment over government purchases, this too could be a lasting legacy of the innovator.

93. Since 1946, Eva grew to control three of the previously private radio stations in Argentina. Eva was a major social force to help women gain voting in 1947 and became the intermediary between Perón and female voters. The 1951 presidential campaign placed a high emphasis on Eva, due to her almost being the vice-presidential nominee.

died. The days following her death demonstrated how radio continued to link Argentine populations to Perón.

Raúl Apold announced on July 25, at 9:10 pm that Eva Perón, the Spiritual Leader of the Nation, had died.⁹⁴ Almost immediately, Argentina came to a standstill; cinemas, theaters, and cafeterias closed down for mourning. Newspapers described Eva as, “champion of workers,” “martyr of work,” “bridge of love between the people and Perón,” and “symbol of all human virtues molding clay image and divinity.”⁹⁵ Newspaper propaganda presented Eva as an extraordinary individual, and ideas in headlines looked more impressive. Over the next week, Apold ordered radio stations to broadcast funeral music.⁹⁶ The media blitz between radio and newspapers demonstrates Apold’s abilities to integrate mass media for the support of the Peronist government.

The effect of Eva’s death can be seen in a change in the government’s rhetoric. In one of Perón’s radio addresses, he stated, “I must also end with the statement that everyone is stealing from the government. I do not like thieves of any kind and do not want to leave those individuals alone. Either that men are honest under my command or they are out.”⁹⁷ The central point was that Perón admitted there were thieves within his administration.⁹⁸ At the end of the address, he stated that there would be a formal investigation into the matter. Perón’s message was a clear change in content from the pure and polished rhetoric before the 1951 election.

94. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 2nd: 290.

95. Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo*, 202.

96. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 2nd: 290.

97. Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo*, 215.

98. Ibid.

Radio Shows

LRA Radio Nacional demonstrated their importance with large audiences and programs specifically directed at education.⁹⁹ In December 1952, the Declaration 13.921 gave mandatory guidelines for the music programs established on all national radio stations.¹⁰⁰ The continuity in radio programming demonstrated that radio was the bedrock of Perón's political campaign and stabilization of content equated with the continuation of power.

The Argentine government stopped the broadcast of two United States "News and Cultural programs" in August of 1952.¹⁰¹ One of the programs, "Ámerican Meridian," was on Radio Belgrano and the other program, "American Panorama," was on Radio Splendid. The United States business community was frustrated by the cancelation because they feared a potential loss of investments in Argentine post-war Markets. In October, the Argentine government doubled the price it charged the US to broadcast its cultural programs in Argentina. The date of the proposed price increase was October 16, a day before the Argentine day of the worker, thus the price increase was a political jab at the United States to state Argentina's independence.

The deaths of two important radio persons within the Peronist government were major setbacks for his administration. The Second Five Year Plan demonstrated how important radio was to designing a political narrative that gained voter support, yet went

99. Ulanovsky, *La Radio Nacional*, 90; Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo*, 228. Listenership grew in 1952, programs such as "Stars at Noon" (*Estrellas al Mediodía*) had almost three million listeners on thirteen stations across Argentina; Radio Belgrano's "Look Out Life" (*Asómese a la vida*) had one and a half million listeners; yet the largest radio network listenership was LRA Radio Nacional with seven to nine million daily listeners. Shows such as, "The Big Five Comedians" (*La Cruzada del Buen Humor*) on Radio El Mundo garnered large audiences.

100. Ulanovsky, *La Radio Nacional*, 90.

101. Morrow, "Argentina Blocks 2 U.S. Radio Shows: Embassy's News and Cultural Programs Forced Off Air-Military Mission to Leave," 16.

against their economic and political needs. In an attempt to kick-start the economy, Perón's use of the radio increasingly became the tool of international advertisement and trade. The radio was a stable tool in 1952 for Perón's political needs.

Trade Offs Between Reality and Fantasy: 1953

The expansion of the Argentine economy was Perón's prime goal of 1953. Domestically, his domination of media gave him control over political narratives. The death of a close ally, Juan Duarte, in April 1953, demonstrated the early signs of a fissure with the Peronist media façade. The questionable causes of Duarte's death resulted in an early crack in how the Peronist media and audiences accepted news. A bomb exploded at a Peronist rally following news of Duarte's death. Shortly thereafter, mobs of Peronist supporters burnt one of the key anti-Peronist symbols, the Jockey Club, to the ground. The changes in Perón's rhetoric and approach to the radio that first became apparent in 1952 became more pronounced in 1953.

The First Crack in Peronist Façade: Juan Duarte and the Media

On the morning of April 10, 1951, in a Buenos Aires alley, a male body was found. The body had a gunshot wound to the head; the entrance wound was from the back of the head and exit was under the chin. Investigators thought the wound was from an execution position. After a few hours of examination, the investigators discovered the identity of the man, Juan Duarte. As the news of his death spread, so did rumors.

Juan Duarte, Eva's brother, had been one of Perón's most loyal supporters. Duarte served as personal secretary to Perón since the early days of Perón's political career.¹⁰² Although the death of Eva in 1952 shook Juan Duarte, he remained a loyal supporter of Perón throughout 1952 and 1953. Juan Duarte was a 38-year-old bachelor who had worked exclusively for Perón. Days before Duarte's death, he had submitted a letter of resignation to Perón.¹⁰³

The official story circulated in the press was that Juan Duarte had committed suicide. Within hours, a two-page suicide letter was found that exonerated Perón and claimed that the recent administration investigations of corruption had been the cause of Juan Duarte's demise.¹⁰⁴ The letter made loving references to Perón such as, "I love you with my soul and I say again the greatest man I have ever known is Perón. I know your love for the people and the nation; I know of your honesty better than anyone else and I part from this world with the loathing for the canaille but happy in the certainty that your people shall never stop loving you and of having been your loyal friend."¹⁰⁵ Duarte's language regarding Perón spoke highly of his loyalty to Perón but read like a propaganda message intended for use on the Argentine public. In a supposedly unrelated move, the Superior Council of the Peronist Party suspended membership of seven former high leaders pending an investigation. On April 11,

102. Throughout the early 1950s, Juan Duarte was decorated with honors for his loyalty.

103. *FREYRE, Duarte Submit Resignation*, Daily Report: Argentina (Buenos Aires, Argentina: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, April 6, 1953), A1, Foreign Broadcast Information Service.

104. "Brother-In-Law of Perón Suicide: Juan Duarte, in Final Message to President, Denies Role in Argentine Corruption," *New York Times*, April 10, 1953, 9.

105. "Duarte's Letter to Peron," *New York Times*, April 10, 1953, 9.

1953, Juan Duarte was buried, very quickly and publically, in Ricoleta.¹⁰⁶ Buenos Aires became embroiled with rumors about who would have killed Juan Duarte and why.¹⁰⁷

Rumors started with Perón's statement on the day before Duarte's funeral. He stated, "We must finish with the thieves, and I shall also finish with anyone who is proved to be accepting graft or thieving in the government."¹⁰⁸ People began to speculate that Duarte had stolen funds from the government, causing Perón to place a hit on him. Others speculated that Perón's Minister Domingo A. Mercante had been responsible for the death. Mercante was a member of the military officer group that had helped to oust Rawson. Days after the investigation started, the Peronist Party removed Mercante, giving more power to the rumors.¹⁰⁹

What is clear about Juan Duarte's death was the mishandling of the story by the Peronist media apparatus. Apold did little to curb the scandal.¹¹⁰ Because the administration did not get ahead of the story, insinuations of Perón's guilt flew in the public's mind. The public's vision of cracks in the official media story of the Juan Duarte affair was a critical problem for the Peronist administration. Perón had built his political fortunes on successful manipulation of mass media since entering politics. For the first time, the majority of the Argentine public questioned Perón's character.¹¹¹ Because reality did not fit the story, the entertainment of questions of Perón began by the public. The willingness to question the

106. "Juan Duarte Buried," *New York Times*, April 11, 1953, 6.

107. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 3rd: 45–46. After Perón's exile Juan Duarte's body would be exhumed to discover that there was no autopsy performed on the body. Luna stated that later it was evident that Juan Duarte did not commit suicide.

108. "Brother-In-Law of Perón Suicide: Juan Duarte, in Final Message to President, Denies Role in Argentine Corruption," 9.

109. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 3rd: 50; "Symbol of Loyalty," *New York Times*, April 13, 1953, 26.

110. Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo*, 222–223. While Mercado never comes out to say that Apold did not get in front of the story, the failure of the Minister of Information becomes apparent when looking at the results.

111. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 3rd:45–50. Luna never comes out and says the relationship between Perón and the public was in doubt, but infers this.

government's official narrative reveal doubt. This was not how Perón functioned in Argentina. The Juan Duarte affair demonstrated a breakdown in the well-oiled Peronist propaganda machine.

Explosion on the Plaza de Mayo and Rhetorical Changes

On April 15, 1953, Perón appeared on the balcony of the Casa Rosada to give a radio address to Argentines. Minutes into the speech, an explosion occurred in front of Perón on the Plaza de Mayo. Stopping only for a few moments in confusion, Perón then continued speaking, "Comrades, these are the same rumors that circulate every day, it seems that today we have felt more murmuring, loving each bomb."¹¹² At that exact moment, another explosion rocked the Plaza de Mayo, and radio listeners clearly heard the explosion.

With the second explosion, Perón's rhetoric changed drastically. Continuing the speech Perón stated, "You all can see that when I from here announced that while we were talking about [the] prepared and executed plan I was not lacking reasons for announcing that they can throw many bombs and circulate many rumors, but what interests us is that they not get their way. We will individualize personal blame for these acts and we will apply the appropriate punishments. I believe that as can be observed we will have to return to the time of getting around with haybail wire in the pockets."¹¹³ The garbled message Perón delivered was one of swift retribution for terrorist actions. The quote also demonstrates Perón's inability to create a coherent message, a clear breakdown in the government's propaganda and messages. Within the aftermath of the second bombing, Perón changed from promoting

112. Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo*, 222–223.

113. *Ibid.*

non-violence to advocating violent retribution. This marked a dramatic change in Perón's rhetoric.

A mob quickly mobilized after the explosion. They focused their rage on the symbol of oligarchy: the Jockey Club.¹¹⁴ A group of citizens ransacked the Jockey Club and then burned the building down.¹¹⁵ The mob then went to the Radical and Socialist party's headquarters, where they ransacked and destroyed the other two buildings.¹¹⁶

The night of April 15th, Perón went on LRA Radio Nacional to calm fears on all sides. In a very dramatic speech Perón stated that his heart went out to the victims and that the Ministry of the Navy had detained the guilty parties. Perón ended his speech by stating, "I ask everyone to calm down, you have reason to be angry and to be alarmed; rightly so, but you need to have thought before action."¹¹⁷ The angry mob had already done their damage. Once again, Perón was behind the news story. The following week, a second set of bombs exploded around Buenos Aires. One of the primary targets was the Military Club, the social headquarters of the Argentine Army.¹¹⁸

The explosions demonstrated the deep social fissure in Argentine politics between Radicals and Peronists. The second set of bombings revealed the rhetoric of the "Opposition," a vague term to describe anybody who was against Perón.¹¹⁹ In July, Perón offered peace with the Radical Party, released political prisoners who were members of the

114. The Jockey Club was a traditional upper class organization in Argentina that pulled in foreign influences and cultures to Argentina.

115. Rock, *Argentina*, 312.

116. Ibid.

117. Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo*, 269.

118. Edward A. Morrow, "Bombs Key Unrest Over Buenos Aires: Perón Press Lays New Blast to 'Opposition'--Regime's Employees Get Orders," *New York Times*, April 26, 1953, 15.

119. Ibid. In the Congress, the "Opposition" was the Radical Party. Peronist in the lower house voted out Señor Campora, who was a friend of Juan Duarte.

Radical Party and proposed a bill of amnesty to political refugees in Uruguay to ease tensions within the country.¹²⁰

The terrorist bombings were political attacks designed to spread as much chaos as possible. That the bombs went off during a presidential radio address demonstrates that the terrorist's target was the radio audience throughout Argentina. There has never been any link between Juan Duarte's death and the April 15th bombings. What is evident from the horrific events is that the Peronist administration's tight control over news and media had started to slip. In those increasingly desperate days for the populist leader, the radio became the political tool of Perón's choice to touch the raw nerve of the Argentine public. In the moments after the explosion, Perón clearly changed his political rhetorical continuity from one of only non-violence to one of violence.

Radio in 1953

The Perónist government tightened its control of radio stations through regulations passed in 1953. The Law 14.241 gave the government power to establish new radio networks through strict government licensing agreements.¹²¹ The law stated that broadcasting was a public service. This gave the government the power to auction licenses.¹²² These regulations clearly demonstrate the change in policies following the failure of the ISI programs and government radio purchases. In the 1940s, with a strong economy, the Peronist administration had bought radio stations and equipment outright. The capital used for the

120. "Argentina Releases Political Prisoners," *Washington Post*, July 17, 1953, 4. *Political Prisoners*, Daily Report: Panama, Briefs, Latin America (Vina del Mar, Radio Minería: United, August 26, 1953), 3, Foreign Broadcast Information Service.

121. Noguera, *Radiodifusión en la Argentina*, 62–63.

122. Herbert M. Clark, "Perón Tightens Control On Radio," *Broadcasting*, November 2, 1953, 98, *American Radio History*; Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación*, 180–183. Sirvén stated that many Argentine's listened to Uruguayan radio to hear the juicy gossip of Argentines.

new radio installations was supposed to be at least seventy percent owned by Argentine citizens.¹²³ The new law kept with the Second Five Year Plan of support of new radio stations but relied on the purchasing power of private capital.

The increased role of Minister of Information Raúl Apold in 1953 demonstrated the problems that the Peronist administration continued to have with public relations. Apold's approach was very different than Yankelevich's with regard to radio. Yankelevich had been interested in free market radio broadcasting. Apold's belief that the radio should be a tool of political propaganda clearly demonstrates the mentality of Apold towards radio as a political tool. While Perón and his administration might have thought that radio was a tool for propaganda, they had never stated it as such in formal documents and letters until 1953. The use of radio as a political tool is reflective of how the Peronist government approached radio during the Second Five Year Plan.

A clear example of Peronist political propaganda was the resurgence of the Peronist idea of the Organized Community (*La Comunidad Organizada*). The *Justicialismo* mantra was the idea that the government should organize economic, social, political, and cultural goals together in the greater Argentine community.¹²⁴ By late 1953, the Argentine economic and political situation had started to crumble as a result of Perón's failed ISI programs. Manufacturers looked to break the power of the labor unions and by doing so, degraded Perón's political base. Perón expanded his rhetoric to manufacturers, and other social groups that traditionally had not supported him.¹²⁵ The ultimate result was that labor unions and

123. "Argentina Tightens Broadcast Controls," *Broadcasting*, January 11, 1954, 102, American Radio History.

124. To many Perón's idea sounded like rhetorical socialism, especially financial firms in the United States. The Organized Community was one aspect of Peronist philosophy from the early organizations that lost political favor before Perón's re-election.

125. Rock, *Argentina*, 314. While Rock is not specific in other groups, one can generalize the emerging Middle Class was a prime target for Perón's Organized Community rhetoric.

spiritual groups that had previously been outside Perón's political power now became "Peronized."¹²⁶ To recast unions as "Peronized" demonstrates the problems with Argentina's economy and Perón losing political power. While the new movement towards "Peronized" blocs yielded little in the way of political results in 1953, they ultimately caused problems for Perón in 1954.

The radio played an increased role in 1953 as a tool for political propaganda for the Peronist government. The Juan Duarte affair and subsequent bombings demonstrate that the Peronist radio machine was out of sync with reality. Juan Duarte's death demonstrated to Argentines for the first time that the Peronist administration's domination of news lacked objectivity. This was, in any case, the first time that the Peronist mass media communications machine demonstrated flaws in its outreach to voters.

The Church, Media, and Scandals of 1954

For the previous eight years, Perón had successfully used radio and mass media. The tide turned against him in 1954 because the president attacked the Catholic Church. The Peronist administration continued to cause damage to itself by the release of political prisoners and loosening of radio and media regulations. At the same time, Perón's rhetoric became increasingly more hostile and arrogant. The critical point for the government was the attacks from various political entities inside Argentina. Perón's use of mass media to curtail these problems was late and ineffective.

126. A key constituency within the new "Peronized" bloc were students.

Radical Party

Since the rise of Perón to power, the Radical Party had few options to voice opposition to Perón's government and argue its political view of the situation inside Argentina. One of the persistent problems with the Radical Party, starting in 1946, was its ineffective use of the radio. The traditional method of speaking to voters had been through newspapers, thus the Radical Party tailored their political language to what looked good in print media.

Perón's release of political prisoners in 1953 primarily involved members of the Radical Party. The timing of the release of the Radical Party members was important, since it came right after the bombings of the Plaza de Mayo.¹²⁷ This gave the Radical Party a new opportunity to gain public support and voice opposition to the Peronist government, but they ultimately did not capitalize on this opportunity. Beginning in 1954, Frondizi began speaking of a formulaic "program" that was counter to Perón's rhetoric. Frondizi's speeches were directed at students, intellectuals, and those who were not interested in Perón's propaganda.¹²⁸ Frondizi's speeches gave the Radical Party political legitimacy.¹²⁹ The Radical Party gained momentum in 1954, though not enough to challenge Perón's hegemony. The mounting success of the party rested on Frondizi's radio messages, which incorporated ideas and language that was more successful on the radio.

127. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 3rd: 198. Members of the Radical Party by this point were diehard youth who were not infatuated with Perón's rhetoric.

128. *Ibid.*

129. *Ibid.*, 3rd:198–99. Luna stated before Frondizi's "The Program" started that the Radical party was primarily always either a step to the right or three steps to the left and had no ability to manage the public responsibility of government through oppositional leadership.

Perón and the Catholic Church

One of the centerpieces of Perón's *Justicialista* culture was firm ties to Catholic faith and Christianity because a majority of Argentines were Catholic.¹³⁰ One of the central tensions between the Peronist administration and the Catholic Church was Perón's tendency to overreach his political authority.¹³¹ Nevertheless, Perón and the Church's relationship remained a neutral issue until the middle of 1954, because there was never open fighting between the two groups.¹³²

The Peronist resurrection of the Organized Community became Perón's problem with the Catholic Church. One of the few major social organizations that did not become "Peronized" was the Catholic Church.¹³³ The church was not "Peronized" because the main institution was outside Argentina; Perón simply grafted onto the name and used the idea of religion to bind people in his propaganda. Anti-Peronists supported the Catholic Church. In July, the formation of the Christian Democratic Party was accused of courting unions for political power.¹³⁴ On the Day of the Student (Día del Estudiante), a traditional school celebration in Argentina, two organized groups of students, one pro-Peronist the other anti-Peronist, marched in Córdoba. The day of the planned march, Perón revoked the official legal recognition of the anti-Peronist school group. The government's actions upset many Catholics and anti-Peronists in Argentina. Either he recognized his political opponents' use

130. *IV Censo General de la Nación*. The 1947 National Census found that almost ninety-five percent of Argentines were Catholic. While the census was taken in 1947, these numbers should have remained stable through Perón's tenure as leader of Argentina.

131. Rock, *Argentina*, 314; Plotkin, *Manaña Es San Perón*. An early example of Perón overstepping spiritual power was in 1948. Perón blessed the Virgin of Lujan as the protector of Argentine railways, putting the Argentine state as the intercessor that made decisions. Another point of tension started in Perón's early administration when education reform was a primary goal. One of the reforms was rewriting kindergarten books from "Mommy and Daddy love me" to "Perón and Evita love me." The traditional educator in Argentina was the Catholic Church, thus many Catholics saw Perón as over reaching political authority into secular matters. Another aspect of tensions was the persistent rumors that Perón had amorous relationships with young girls.

132. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 3rd: 221–250; Rock, *Argentina*, 273–317.

133. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 3rd: 223.

134. Rock, *Argentina*, 315.

of the Catholic Church, or he thought that he had more power than the church in Argentina. From September to the end of December 1954, Perón attacked the Catholic Church.¹³⁵ Throughout the clash between Perón and the powerful religious organization, the media played a role in supporting the anti-Peronists.

The strategy of going to mass media to curb scandals had previously worked for Perón. In November 1954, the leader declared in a radio address that governors of various provinces spoke of a conspiracy against the government that three clerics directed attacks against Perón.¹³⁶ This open attack against specific members of the church did not fare well politically because Perón attacked a major institution that many Argentines considered sacred. The other reason that Perón's attacks on the Church lacked support was that the opposition used these attacks to gain political advantages.¹³⁷

By this time, the president controlled most of the major news and radio businesses in Argentina, thus the major news outlets provided a pro-Peronist perspective. Catholic newspapers began to issue reports condemning Perón, which led him to start attacking these newspapers with regulations, enforcements, and closures.¹³⁸ After Perón shut down the Catholic newspaper, a new tide of street pamphlets about the corruption of the Peronist government began to circulate from unofficial channels.¹³⁹ Anti-Peronists groups, specifically the Catholic Action, organized and began issuing public statements about the

135. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 3rd: 230; *Press Reaction*, Daily Report: Argentina (Santiago: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, November 12, 1954), a7, Foreign Broadcast Information Service; Rock, *Argentina*, 315. In October, Perón revoked the special religious education in the school systems that he previously gave the Catholic Church in 1947. In November, Perón called a group of Catholic Bishops, "Open Enemies of his government." In December, Perón annulled the Church's annual Immaculate Conception ceremony and pushed for the legalization of Divorce and Prostitution.

136. John Murray, "Perón and the Church," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 44, no. 175 (October 1, 1955): 258–259; Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 3rd: 235.

137. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 3rd: 221–250; Rock, *Argentina*, 273–317.

138. Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación*, 202.

139. Rock, *Argentina*, 315.

injurious and sinful treatment that bishops, priests, and members of their organization suffered in Argentina.¹⁴⁰ The breakdown of the Peronist machine meant to stop scandals from becoming public not only failed but also managed to strengthen the oppositional forces in 1954. The charges that Perón leveled against the Catholic Church backfired on the leader. The attacks on the Catholic Church undermined Perón's political image because many Argentines were Catholic. When an Argentine president, leader of a majority Catholic nation, attacks the institution of the church, his days are numbered.

Changing Radio Regulations

In December 1954, Argentina shut down the SIRA program.¹⁴¹ The fact that the government shut down the program designed to send Argentine culture and products abroad demonstrated that Perón had problems with his government. The second major change to Argentine radio was the privatization of radio. In January 1954, the Peronist administration stated that government control of radio had ended with the means of the directive 17.959/54.¹⁴² The change in ownership points to the failure in the Argentine private sector to support heavy government intervention in radio. The sale of radio stations to private hands, in reality, meant that the government sold these stations to pro-Peronist friendly buyers.¹⁴³

140. *Protest To Argentina*, Daily Report: Briefs, Chile (Santiago: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, November 19, 1954), f1, Foreign Broadcast Information Service.

141. "International Short-Wave," *Radio & Television News*, October 1954, 70, American Radio History. The exact date of the closure of SIRA is not listed.

142. *Commercial Broadcasting To Be Allowed*, Daily Report: Argentina (Valparaiso: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, January 6, 1954), A1, Foreign Broadcast Information Service; *Ulanovsky, La Radio Nacional*, 95. The government installed heavy regulations, such as, a one million peso per year tax, abstention from disseminating untrue, biased, or panic-provoking news items; and radio advertising is required to be decorous and free from fraud. Argentine radio was reorganized into four networks: Network A, formally Radio Belgrano, owned by Television Promoters Association with owners Cecilio Madanes and Blackie; Network B, formerly Radio El Mundo, owned by Carlos Aloe Vicente; and Network C, formerly Radio Splendid, owned by the Peralta Ramos family.

143. "Argentina; Wealth Recovery," *Time*, December 19, 1955, 16. The article sites Jorge Antonio Chibene as the buyer of Radio Belgrano and Canal 7 in 1955. Jorge Antonio previously was a orderly in the

While the directive 17.959/54 meant that the state no longer owned stations, the sale of radio stations to friendly groups meant that the government still had a majority of air-time and restricted oppositional parties' abilities to get on the radio.¹⁴⁴

Political opposition increased in power in 1954, while Perón's power continued to decrease. Perón's control of mass media started to break down in 1954. The domination of the radio by Perón did not bring the same political results now as it had in the 1940s and early 1950s. Privatization of radio stations was an economic necessity for Perón and gave more power to oppositional groups through decreased government control of media content.

From Domination to Exile: 1955

The mass media conglomeration that Perón had so effectively used to rise to power during the mid-1940s slowly deteriorated and became the source of his eventual exile from Argentina. The public perception of problems, which started in 1952, with the death of Eva Perón and Juan Duarte, slowly morphed into rhetorical and radio mass media control issues for Perón. His conflict with the Catholic Church and the privatization of radio represented a weak flank to opposition attack. The radio in 1955 became a tool for both Perón and the opposition in creating a political narrative for power. By the middle of 1955, the attacks on the Catholic Church encouraged the military to engage in open rebellion due to the conservative military support of the Catholic Church. Uruguayan radio stations broadcast

military, and quickly rose in ranks after he started his friendship with Perón, to the point of buying car dealership licenses in 1955, alongside radio station purchases. The Time article was from the post-Perón period when the Navy began destroying and removing all relics of Peronism in the attempt to return Argentina to pre-1943 world mentality.

144. *Exile's Petition*, Daily Report: Briefs, Argentina (Santiago: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, February 19, 1954), A1, Foreign Broadcast Information Service. While Perón lost control of the Argentine radio, international radio from Uruguay started to increase in political ideas and intervention in Argentine politics. A group of Argentine exiles in Uruguay called on the Peronist administration to open vice presidential elections.

news from oppositional forces inside Argentina. The radio became a method to track the evolution of the growing rebellion.

Catholic Church, Navy, and the Radical Partry's Use of Media

The end of 1954 found the Radical Party and the Catholic Church's political fortunes tied together. Both groups were heavily anti-Peronist and had a reason to attack the government. In early 1955, to add insult to injury, Perón called for the separation of Church and State.¹⁴⁵ Catholic radio shows disappeared from the airwaves in February of that year.¹⁴⁶ The dissemination of Catholic information through unofficial channels heightened public knowledge of the Peronist administration's attacks. The Radical Party helped spread the news of Peronist attacks against the Catholic Church. In November 1954, the Radical leader Arturo Frondizi established a National Committee on the issue. From the committee, Frondizi further established the narrative of Peronist persecution with the statement, "the Radical Party recognizes and sympathizes with Catholic suffering, persecution, and jail for defending their right to freely express their beliefs and thoughts."¹⁴⁷ The use of Frondizi's rhetoric to emphasize the rights that the Perónist government had recently taken away reflected the change in political rhetoric from the Radical Party. For the first time since Perón had been elected, an anti-Peronist (Frondizi) used rhetoric similar to Perón's to generate a political base. Since 1954, the deteriorating situation in Argentina drew the attention of the military. The Argentine Army, led by General Eduard Londari, and the Navy were the two most important military powers inside the country. The Argentine Navy was largely

145. Rock, *Argentina*, 315.

146. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 3rd: 288. Luna makes no clear statement on why these radio programs "disappeared," one can assume that they were forcibly removed.

147. *Ibid.*

composed of Catholics and condemned Perón's attacks on the church. Perón understood the political power that the military had in Argentina and attempted to comply with their wishes to stop attacking the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church and Radical Party both utilized media to activate a group capable of changing the president. Through unofficial pamphlets and political statements, the Radical Party and Catholic Church found openings in Perón's mass media domination and used them to spread information counter to the state's propaganda. The Radical Party gained legitimacy in 1955 by using rhetoric that appealed to voters and revolutionaries alike. The proverbial powder keg was lit and all parties waited for the explosion.

The Corpus Christi Celebration and Open Revolt

Tensions in Argentina were high in the first half of 1955. The Catholic tradition of Corpus Christi was a significant symbol of the church that occurred annually in early June of 1955. On Saturday, June 11, during one of the ceremonies, the Argentine flag was set on fire. Displayed for all Argentines on the sixth edition of the daily newspaper was a picture of Perón with an Argentine general looking on as the Argentine flag burned.¹⁴⁸ The image demonstrated two points simultaneously: first that Perón was not the single leader any more but relied on others for power; and second, that the destruction of the symbol of Argentina, the flag, was Perón's fault, a metaphor that Argentina's social and political unrest were because of Perón and his policies. The design of the image created another chip in Perón's damaged political image. The defamation of the Argentine flag was the tipping point. In an attempt to repair the relationship with Catholics, Perón and the CGT condemned the flag

148. Ibid., 3rd:297.

burning. The image of Perón looking on as the Argentine flag was desecrated was the act that immediately set the nationalist military wheels in motion.

On Monday, June 13, the Peronist media machine went to work to curb the story. Perón arrested two hundred and fifty Roman Catholics at the Buenos Aires cathedral.¹⁴⁹ The Radicals took responsibility and denied that the Catholics were involved with the flag burning, because Perón understood how divisive the attacks on the church were to his coalition.¹⁵⁰ Monday night, Perón spoke on the radio saying, “I don't know if this admirable and patient Argentine people, which in this also proves to be the best that we have, might someday get tired and decide to take justice into their own hands.”¹⁵¹ Perón's use of nationalist rhetoric was not able to assuage the emotional charge of the desecration of the Argentine flag.

For three days, the military planned a course of action to counter the president. On June 16, 1955, the military acted. Pro-Peronist demonstrations against the Catholic Church were scheduled to continue. Unions and protesters rallied at the Plaza de Mayo to march on the Municipal Cathedral in Buenos Aires. At 12:40, as protesters organized, three planes flew over the plaza and rained bombs on protesters and the Casa Rosada, killing two hundred Peronist, almost all civilians.¹⁵² A group of military officials entered the Casa Rosada and began a fire fight with Peronist military leaders.

149. Edward A. Morrows, “Argentina Seizes 250 at Cathedral in Wake of Clash: Roman Catholics Arrested in Church-State Rift -- Perón Summons the Congress BIG PERÓN FORCES IN BUENOS ARES,” *New York Times*, June 13, 1955.

150. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 3rd: 305.

151. *Ibid.*

152. *Ibid.*, 3rd: 311–312. Over two hundred Peronist were killed in the attack, almost all civilians.

Radio also played an important aspect in the rebellion by spreading terror throughout Argentina.¹⁵³ While the bombings occurred on the Plaza de Mayo, Rosario—the second largest city in Argentina—fell into the hands of the Argentine Navy. The news of Rosario’s fall to the rebel group came from the Uruguayan refugee radio station in Montevideo.¹⁵⁴ The station was called the “Revolutionary Argentine Radio.” The Rebel Radio reported that the Navy forces started in Puerto Belgrano and two warships had attacked the Peronist government.¹⁵⁵ The military and oppositional groups knew that the Uruguayan radio station was outside of Perón’s domination, and thus reports could be spread of victories against the Peronist government without intervention.¹⁵⁶ Radio reports from foreign sources, such as those reporting the fall of Rosario and the bombing of the Plaza de Mayo, proved to be a destabilizing agent in Argentina.

The Peronist radios and newspapers did not mention the bombings or any possible problems with the military. Instead, the press focused on the effective union strike against the church.¹⁵⁷ Audiences were interested in information about the attacks, though, not state propaganda. The political narrative presented to media consumers was not based in any present reality, a critical problem that the Peronist administration had faced since the incorporation of newspapers. The fact that the Peronist media did not address a key problem within the country reduced political support for both the government and the media.

153. *Ibid.*, 3rd: 325. In the morning of June 16, Radio Mitre was taken over by a retired captain who started to spread word of the rebellion, but was interrupted due to technicians stopping the announcements.

154. “Argentine Navy Leads Uprising; Planes Flee to Uruguay Refuge: Bulletin,” *The Washington Post and Times Herald (1954-1959)*, June 17, 1955, 1.

155. “Perón Decrees Crackdown on Mobs in Buenos Aires: Blames Reds for Attacks on Churches, Rebel Radio Says Fight Continues,” *Hartford Courant*, June 18, 1955, 1.

156. Rock, *Argentina*, 316. Secondary literature does not note the fall of Rosario early in June 1955. Because the secondary literature does not mention this event, I treat the radio report as a method of spreading propaganda and fear against Perón. The statement was meant to inspire fear in the listener and confusion, two hyper critical points that undermine confidence in Perón. Rock notes that a few scattered mutinies were quickly squashed by Army commander Lucero, but does not specify any further information.

157. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 3rd: 316.

On the night of June 16, Perón took to the radio in a belated attempt to guide and inspire confidence in Argentines. Perón failed to connect, however, to many of the disaffected members within his party who took to the streets of Buenos Aires and burned churches in retaliation.¹⁵⁸ On June 17th, Perón spoke to Argentines on the radio, praising the Army and asking workers to help restore order.¹⁵⁹ The Peronist government looked weak and conciliatory to the rebel faction. Pamphlets stated that Perón knew of the planned attack on the Plaza de Mayo.¹⁶⁰ The battle to win the hearts and minds of constituents slowly gave advantage to the anti-Peronist forces.

The primary figure of power who supported Perón and stopped the chaos was Army General Lucero, who brought order to the city.¹⁶¹ Perón's power now rested on the Army.¹⁶² The Peronist administration used previously successful political tools, such as the Eva Perón Foundation, to garner support from the lower classes. Starting in July, the state radio broadcast a program called "The Eva Perón Foundation Speaks" that demonstrated to listeners the positive qualities the charity had fostered in Argentina.¹⁶³ Stories from the Eva Perón Foundation did not make a splash with listeners, though, who for the first time in years were able to hear and understand the criticisms against Peronism.

158. Rock, *Argentina*, 316.

159. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 3rd: 323. The official mantra that listeners had was, "No More Fighting!"

160. *Ibid.*, 3rd:325.

161. "Lucero Presses Plans For Peace in Argentina: Perón in Seclusion," *The Christian Science Monitor (1908-Current File)*, June 20, 1955, 3.

162. Rock, *Argentina*, 316. The Army put political pressure on Perón to reshuffle his cabinet, Perón complied with the removal of Borlenghi.

163. *New Radio Program*, Daily Report: Briefs, Argentina (Buenos Aires, Argentina: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, June 29, 1955), a1, Foreign Broadcast Information Service; Jules Dubois, "Report Perón Losing Power: Army Minister Taking Reins in His Hands Radio Passes Up Honor to Eva," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 21, 1955, 1. It also should be noted that Radio Mitre was the same station that was bombed in 1947. The use of Evita as a political liaison through the radio to voters was also demonstrated when radio stations did not broadcast the official memorial hour of Eva Perón's news ritual.

Perón's new Minister of the Interior gave the leader the sober news that the Peronist movements were on the same political level of support that other parties were.¹⁶⁴ To rectify the situation, Perón decided to open freedoms of the press and radio to oppositional parties. The Radical Party stated, "The only possible reconciliation must be based on freedom."¹⁶⁵ The discussion of freedoms demonstrates the Radical Party's evolution to incorporate new styles of rhetoric on broadcast media that linked the agitated Argentine populations to their own platform. The attempt to show reconciliation to opponents meant sharing one of the key sources of Perón's political power: the radio.

The weeks following the Corpus Christi celebration witnessed a breakdown in Perón's political power. The president went from a disagreement with the Catholic Church to reliance on the Argentine Army for political power. Unofficial channels of dissemination of information were a way for anti-Peronists to criticize the Argentine government without using official news media. One of the central problems of the Peronist administration during the bombing and its aftermath was that the government attempted to cover up the rebellion and play down the effects through propaganda and other tactics used to silence critics. From the bombing of the Plaza de Mayo to the end of June, Perón's political rhetoric shifted from attack to reconciliation. The change in rhetoric occurred because the leader was losing political power and could not openly take on the navy. The change in rhetoric is important because it opened the door for reconciliation without fear of retribution from Perón. Reconciliation was the best political option for Perón by the end of June 1955. The failure to incorporate what listeners wanted to hear into news broadcasts meant that the official

164. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 3rd: 330.

165. *Ibid.*, 3rd:331.

channels of news became discredited and listeners looked for alternative, unofficial news broadcasts.

Radio Belgrano and Perón's Exile

The call to open radio meant that opposition parties looked for a way to present their political narratives and ideas to the general public, much like Perón had done in 1945 to gain his release from prison. In July, Frondizi asked the Minister of Communications for radio time to speak with the Argentine people about events that transpired and the Radical Party's plan to move forward.¹⁶⁶ The Radical Party played Perón's hand for air time and use of the radio. Submitting to political pressure from both the Argentine Army and the Radical Party, Perón granted freedom to newspapers and radio networks.

One of the central problems for Perón following the Radical Party's use of the radio networks was the public image of the president was at the lowest point since before he came to power. On July 16, the Argentine Navy announced that the fleet was sailing into Buenos Aires, heightening tensions and rumors about Perón's fleeing power. The rumor campaign against Perón took the political wind from his sails and added an atmosphere of terror and paranoia to Argentina.¹⁶⁷ On July 21, Perón addressed the rumor campaign in an awkward speech that the people no longer identified with his appeal.¹⁶⁸ The July 21 speech only solidified Perón's weakness in the public perception.

166. "Perón Aide Bars Radio Time to Foe: Radical Leader Fails in Bid to Broadcast--Opposition Setting New Policy," *New York Times*, July 8, 1955, 10; Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 3rd: 331. This article was dated July 8, the speech would have happened on July 7th. Luna states that the Radical Party had use of radio stations on July 5th, 1955.

167. "Argentine Broadcast Hits Rumors," *Hartford Courant*, July 21, 1955, 6.

168. *Warning Issued Against Rumor Campaign*, Daily Report: Argentina (Buenos Aires, Argentina: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, July 21, 1955), a1, Foreign Broadcast Information Service. . Perón's speech warned against rumors as a way to cloud the mind, stating, "Politicians who aspire to form a party by casting nets in muddy waters; frustrated informers in search of a clientele responsive to imagination; fools who

The most important radio network in Argentina by this time was Radio Belgrano, which had been the first radio institution to be taken over by the Peronist administration. The artistic director was Samuel Yankelevich, son of Jaime Yankelevich.¹⁶⁹ Radio Belgrano had been recently privatized after the government sold the station in 1954.

On July 27, the Radical Party was authorized by Perón to speak on Radio Belgrano. The party marched from its headquarters to Radio Belgrano, chanting slogans against authoritarian governments.¹⁷⁰ Frondizi took advantage of the opportunity to speak directly to listeners and gave a speech filled with emotion that connected the Radical Party's cause to the audience.¹⁷¹ One aspect of Frondizi's speech listed the goals of the Radical Party, such as lifting the state of internal war, giving amnesty for all those who suffered persecution, imprisonment or exile for defending their ideas, full freedom of thought, religion and assembly, press and organizations, that schools should not be tools of political propaganda, and a return of democracy.¹⁷² Frondizi went on to state that the Radical Party wanted "peace but not at the cost of liberty, nor the renunciation of our democratic ideals."¹⁷³ The Radical Party's rhetorical stance against tyranny and the promotion of democratic ideals was one of

would give their souls for a listening public and all those who lack any decent idea of morals, solidarity or patriotism, and who are desirous of anything that is not normalcy because during normalcy their lack of ideas make them float like cork." The discrepancy in dates demonstrates a problem between primary and secondary historiography. The Radical Party openly challenged the Peronist government for radio time, under the statements made at the end of June about open and fair use of radio. Perón's language was veiled in attacks against the Radical Party, and never demonstrated the previous power and previous rhetorical standards.

169. The lack of primary sources about Samuel and Jamie Yankelevich's political persuasion makes it difficult to understand their political views. Most of the secondary historiography states that Jaime Yankelevich was a staunch anti-Peronist, yet he worked with the government to gain radio power in Argentina. Less is known of Samuel Yankelevich. The transference of Jaime Yankelevich's anti-Peronism to Samuel is in the secondary literature. Without concrete evidence this becomes only speculation.

170. Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo*, 275.

171. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 3rd: 338. Luna stated that Frondizi's speech was submitted in a coherent and seductive tone. Frondizi had a sexy voice and perfect diction. The skill of the phrases and words gave the speech a profound impact and should be considered one of the most important speeches in Argentine history.

172. Jules Dubois, "Perón Lets Foe Blast Him Over Radio Network," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 28, 1955, 3.

173. Edward A. Morrow, "Perón Foe Lists Terms of Peace: First Opposition Radio Talk in Almost Decade Calls for Return of Freedoms," *New York Times*, July 28, 1955, 12.

the central aspects of what connected Frondizi to the listeners. In the speech, the Radical Party also listed criticisms of the Peronist government, such as corruption with foreign companies, specifically the United States firm Standard Oil.¹⁷⁴ The Radical Party stole another play from Perón by appealing to nationalism and linking Perón to foreign corporations. Upon leaving Radio Belgrano, Frondizi and the Radical Party were greeted by people surrounding the station with waving handkerchiefs and singing the Argentine national anthem.¹⁷⁵

After Frondizi's speech, Perón took to the airwaves to recoup lost political power. Perón's speech was short and did not captivate Argentine audiences like his predecessor.¹⁷⁶ Another reason Perón's radio speech lacked political power was because, to audiences, it looked as if Perón simply was following in Frondizi's footsteps. The Radical Party continued to use Radio Belgrano as the main political pivot point between Argentines and the party's platform. Between Frondizi's speech on July 27 and August 22, the Radical Party sent leaders to give speeches that defamed and provoked the Peronist party.¹⁷⁷ The Radical Party coopted Perón's main propaganda medium and used it against him, proving the political importance of the radio.

Perón knew the political tides were against him and his administration. To stay in power would require a change in policies and in rhetoric. Perón's problem was that he had to create a change in rhetorical standards that would manifest in positive results. The president first went to newspapers, the traditional media of the Radical Party, and declared that the

174. Rock, *Argentina*, 315; Morrow, "Perón Foe Lists Terms of Peace: First Opposition Radio Talk in Almost Decade Calls for Return of Freedoms," 12; Dubois, "Perón Lets Foe Blast Him Over Radio Network," 3; Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 3rd: 337–9.

175. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 3rd: 337; Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo*, 277; Rock, *Argentina*, 316. Rock stated that Perón arrested members of the Radical Party who spoke out on that night.

176. Dubois, "Perón Lets Foe Blast Him Over Radio Network," 3.

177. Luna, *Perón y Su Tiempo*, 3rd: 338–339; Mercado, *El inventor del peronismo*, 276–277.

Radical Party should stop the internal war first before any more changes could be made.¹⁷⁸

The leader also used the LRA Radio Nacional to speak about the rebel radio station that had broadcast messages to alarm the population.¹⁷⁹ By the middle of August, Perón continued the speeches of conciliation and peace within Argentina. While Perón spoke of reconciliation, he knew his time was quickly drawing to an end.

The political oppositional groups began branching out to previously pro-Peronist groups. The Radical Party, in their successful use of the radio, gained political prestige. The Christian Democratic Party, a group organized during the Radical Party and Catholic Church's first problems with Perón, started to gain support from women.¹⁸⁰ The Socialist Party's leader returned to Argentina to reestablish the newspaper *La Vanguardia*.¹⁸¹ The talk of reconciliation meant that the tension was eased and the state of internal war slowly drifted out of open conflict. Perón understood that his previous political base of power was crumbling quickly.

On August 31, 1955, Perón planned a mass rally by the CGT.¹⁸² The audience was pro-Perón, due to policies that the leader enacted throughout his tenure as president. Perón then did what would have been unthinkable a year before, he offered his resignation to the crowd. Immediately the crowd rejected his resignation. Taken by the positive response of the crowd, Perón called for attacks against their enemies. Perón called for "Cinco por uno," for

178. Edward A. Morrow, "Perón Paper Bars End of Curbs Now: Answer to Foe's Broadcast Says the Opposition Must End Acts of 'War' First," *New York Times*, July 30, 1955, 34.

179. *Clandestine Radio*, Daily Report: Argentina (Buenos Aires: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, August 22, 1955), a4, Foreign Broadcast Information Service. The report stated that the Peronist government attempted to remove legitimacy from the radio station by statements that the radio station was run by amateurs.

180. "Christian Democrats New Party Opposes Peron: Appeal to Women," *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 16, 1955, 13.

181. *Ghioldi Returning*, Daily Report: Argentina (Valparaiso: United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, August 21, 1955), a2, Foreign Broadcast Information Service.

182. Rock, *Argentina*, 316.

every dead Peronist there would be five dead oppositionists.¹⁸³ The swift change in rhetoric, from conciliation to open attack was the moment that the internal war returned in Argentina.

Tensions grew between Peronist and anti-Peronist groups for two weeks before the military mobilized to restore order in Argentina. On September 15th, the Argentine Navy and Army started a general revolt against Perón. The Radio Base at Puerto Belgrano became a radio station called the “Voice of Freedom” and broadcast announcements to the navy officers.¹⁸⁴ One of the first provinces to fall to the Argentine Army was Córdoba. The leader of the rebellion in Córdoba was General Eduardo Lonardi.¹⁸⁵ The radio began to track the movements of the rebellion. Lonardi gained control of seventeen stations within Córdoba, Mendoza, and Bahia Blanca.¹⁸⁶ The radio stations began to spread fear of future bombings throughout broadcasts to destabilize any pockets of Peronist supporters.¹⁸⁷ The Uruguayan radio station, Radio *El Espectador* Montevideo, also broadcast news of the rebellion.¹⁸⁸

After reports threatening bombing of Buenos Aires, Perón resigned on September 19, 1955.¹⁸⁹ Perón then left Argentina aboard a Paraguayan gunboat sent to fetch him by Alfredo Stroessner. After a few days of negotiation between the Army and the Navy, an announcement was made on Argentine radio stating that there would be no more reprisals against Peronists. Lonardi officially proclaimed the action as a, “revolution of liberty”

183. Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación*, 204; Rock, *Argentina*, 316.

184. Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación*, 204.

185. Rock, *Argentina*, 316.

186. Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación*, 204.

187. *Rebel Radio Warns of Dawn Bombing*, Daily Report: Argentina (Puerto Belgrano Naval Base (Revolutionary): United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, August 19, 1955), a6, Foreign Broadcast Information Service; Fernando Sorrentino, ed., *Siete Conversaciones con Jorge Luis Borges* (Buenos Aires: A Editorial El ateneo, 1974). Fear was rampant throughout Argentina, the poet Jorge Luis Borges’ recalled in 1974, the fear of bombing in Argentina. Borges stated that he went throughout the city meeting people who were upset and scared of the bombing that was to occur. After the fear of bombings past, he and others ran to the Plaza de Mayo shouting until they were hoarse, “Viva la Patria!”

188. *Rebel Radio Excesses Thanks to Uruguay*, Daily Report: Argentina (Puerto Belgrano Naval Base (Revolutionary): United States Foreign Radio Broadcasts, August 20, 1955), a2, Foreign Broadcast Information Service; Sirvén, *Perón y los medios de comunicación*, 205.

189. *Rebel Radio Warns of Dawn Bombing*, a6; Rock, *Argentina*, 316.

(Revolución Libertadora), with neither victors nor vanquished.¹⁹⁰ Perón's political melodrama, that broadcast entirely on radio, ended the Fifth Act swiftly with his exile to Paraguay.

Conclusion

Perón's lack of domination of the Argentine media between 1950 to 1955 was the foundation crack in his power and resulted in his eventual exile. The underlying problem in Argentina was the economic fluctuations that resulted in internal instability. After the actions of the Visca Commission, the oppositional newspapers *La Prensa* and *Clarín* came under Perón's domination. With the media landscape within Perón's hands, news stories failed to conform to reality. Instead, Perón used the radio as a tool of propaganda. Radio audiences began looking for alternative views and ideas but were left with only pro-Peronist ideas. The saturation of the radio market meant that Perón's messages were not as effective as previously and audiences began not to be incorporated into the propaganda presented.

The death of Yankelevich and Evita in 1952 was a turning point for the administration. Yankelevich brought television into Argentina and played a critical role in stabilizing Perón's radio policies. The absence of Yankelevich correlated with the rise of Raúl Apold, the Secretary of Information. Apold's view of radio was the polar opposite of Yankelevich's. The rise of Apold led to the radio becoming more propagandistic. The loss of Eva was the second critical death to the Peronist administration. The political liaison between voters and Perón meant a loss of a central political figure who had utilized radio effectively.

Perón's attacks on the Catholic Church led directly to his exile. The attacks of oppositional groups demonstrated to the majority of Argentines the mass media Peronist

190. Rock, *Argentina*, 317.

façade and helped demonstrate to Argentines the problems of Peronism. Perón's opening radio to the opposition was one of the key moments in the anti-Peronist revolt. The Radical Party's rhetoric changed drastically from 1950 to 1955 to become rhetoric that was designed specifically for the radio. Thus, when Frondizi spoke on Radio Belgrano in 1955, he effectively used the radio as Perón had in 1945 and 1946.

The radio played a key role in the destabilization of Perón in 1955 with the oppositional groups having the ability to speak on the radio and to use destabilization techniques against Peronist forces. News was the key in how terror spread to destabilize Argentina after the bombing of the Plaza de Mayo, and radio announcements helped the opposition. The question becomes, how did Perón fail to use radio effectively, and did the opposition follow the method that Perón did? First, Perón's central failure with regards to the radio was that he utilized the radio as a propaganda tool and crafted stories in the media that had no political reality. For example, in the treatment of Juan Duarte in 1953, the radio emphasized the government's narrative over a reality that was spoken of on the streets. Radio content between 1949 and 1955 did not undergo a great change, thus radio programs were not the source of the change.

The Fourth and Fifth Acts of Perón's political melodrama took shape on the radio. The opposition took elements of Perón's radio use, such as rhetoric about national ideas, but did not follow the same cultural paradigm that Perón created in his rise to power in 1945. The Radical Party used images of liberty and democratic values as the political anchor of their political messages. Peronism in the late 1950s and 1960s attempted to integrate voters along the same *Justicialita* lines of cultural division. The Radical Party did not utilize the central rhetorical ideas Perón used in his rise to power, thus throughout the period the Radical Party

constantly struggled to maintain political control in the late 1950s. What made Argentine radio such a powerful political tool was not the propaganda element, but the appeal of honesty on a human level to audiences.

CONCLUSION

Like a magnet whose reversed polarity brings people together or pulls them apart, the radio has a long and illustrious history in the creation of political power. In the United States, for example, radio shaped culturally resonating moments such as those created by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in his fireside chats. By talking directly to the people, FDR was able to produce an image in the public's consciousness that he was a reformer fighting for them, while pushing forward with his economic reform agenda. In 1994, the radio played a key part in the Rwanda genocide by delivering the vividly riveting reports of gruesome massacres to the public around the world. Technological and political powers that derive from the radio have changed the outcome of nations in the twentieth century.

Juan Perón was a popularly-elected president who held his position in part due to his effective use of mass media. He held office from 1946 to 1955. The Argentina that Perón inherited was a nation divided on lines of ethnicity, race, culture, politics, and class. Because of Perón and his popular wife Evita's personal charisma, Argentina united behind them. Through the use of the radio, these leaders wove together the threads of the Argentine nation into a tapestry of Perónist power. Juan Perón was able to reach out and forge a political base out of the lower classes. The so called *descamisados* were the industrial workers at the base of Argentina's industrial program, they became the key to Perón's success.

The integration of popular culture as a political rhetorical device was key for Perón in integrating two diverse populations into his political program. The integration of rural and

urban cultures enabled the leader to create a political base without exclusion of population. Perón's political integration is demonstrated by his first election in 1946. The use of intermediaries between audiences and Perón, such as Eva Duarte, meant that the populist leader had a radio-proven personality with whom audiences could identify. The integration of radio stations into Perón's administration meant that the leader moved radio and news from a reality based foundation to political propaganda. The lack of objective reality was the central reason for Perón's failure. As Perón mismanaged radio, oppositional political groups began gaining support and with the help of the military overthrew Perón.

Perón cast a long shadow on the future of politics and media relations in Argentina. Perón's dilemma of needing to push forward with economic programs without interference from oppositional parties became one of the central struggles in post-Peronist Argentine politics. Perón framed his political support from the under classes and built a party that organized around cultural motifs. As Perón's power started to wane, the Radical Party began using some of Perón's rhetorical ploys, yet they never used cultural tactics to incorporate working and lower classes. The lack of Radical Party's integration of populist rhetoric and cultural practices was the central reason the party could not sustain political control after Perón's exile. Until Perón's reelection in 1972, the Radical Party struggled with media and political messages. After his reelection, Perón struggled connecting with voters and establishing political hegemony in Argentina. It was not until the political fracturization of Argentina during the 1970s that the military understood that to placate the population that domination of the media was the central method of control, alongside military torture and disappearance tactics. This worked until the Falkland War, when the media narrative that the military produced failed and caused the opening for the return of democracy in Argentina.

During the late 1980s, when a reformed Peronist party returned to power, the objective media was a thorn in the government's side. Even today, the Christina Kirchner government has an antagonistic relationship with the media.

Perón's political melodrama in the 1940s and 1950s was the first Argentine instance of politics integrating with lower class culture and mentalities. The radio facilitated the cultural aspects and help augment Perón's political power. His melodrama was presented on the radio like a serial story of ups and downs that touched the essence of tragedy. The first and second Peronist governments demonstrate how powerful politics can be with culture added to the mix. The static years between 1955 to 1982, to the end of the Falkland War, is the next series with new characters and compounded problems. The first in this series was Perón's political melodrama; please stay tuned for future updates.

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Vita

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