EXPERIENCES OF PEACE, COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNICATION IN THE COMMUNITY RADIOS OF CAUCA COLOMBIA IN RELATION TO PUBLIC POLICIES FOR ITS STRENGTHENING IN THE POST-CONFLICT

Paulo César Paz Ramos
María Isabel Campos Achicanoy
Pedro Felipe Díaz Arenas

ABSTRACT

Objective: To identify keys to sustainability of communication and cultural experiences led by community radio in Cauca, Colombia, and propose recommendations to strengthen these media in the post-conflict.

Theoretical Framework: The relationship between communication and culture policies and media diversity is explored, highlighting the role of state institutions such as the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies.

Method: Qualitative approach through documentary analysis, interviews and observation.

Results and Discussion: Experiences of Nasa Stereo and Radio Pa'yumat, community radio stations of the Nasa indigenous people, are highlighted, highlighting technical, cultural and security challenges. The role of these media as agents of peace and promoters of indigenous cultural identity in Cauca is discussed, with implications for public policies.

Implications of the Research: Underlines the need for policies that promote cultural diversity and media pluralism in post-conflict contexts, guaranteeing equitable access to media, especially for marginalized populations such as indigenous peoples.

Originality/Value: The research offers an in-depth look at the crucial role of community radios in peace building in Cauca, Colombia, with relevant findings both academic and those related to public policies that support community media.

Keywords: Cauca Departament, Community Stations Indigenous, Post-Conflict, Public Policies in Communication.

EXPERIÊNCIAS DE PAZ, CULTURAIS E DE COMUNICAÇÃO EM RÁDIOS COMUNITÁRIAS EM CAUCA COLÔMBIA EM RELAÇÃO ÀS POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS PARA O SEU FORTECIMENTO NO PÓS-CONFLITO

RESUMO

Objetivo: Identificar as chaves para a sustentabilidade da comunicação e das experiências culturais lideradas por rádios comunitárias em Cauca, Colômbia, e propor recomendações para fortalecer esses meios de comunicação no pós-conflito.

1 Corporación Universitaria Comfacauna-Unicomfacauna, Popayán, Cauca, Colombia. E-mail: ppaz@unicomfacauna.edu.co
2 Universitaria Comfacauna, Inzá, Cauca, Colombia. E-mail: mariasabelcampos90@gmail.com Orcid: http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5428-9060
3 Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira, Facultad de Ciencias Humanas y Bellas Artes de la Universidad del Quindío, Armenia, Colombia. E-mail: pfdiaz@uniqindio.edu.co Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6862-7948
Quadro Teórico: Explora-se a relação entre as políticas de comunicação e cultura e a diversidade mediática, destacando o papel das instituições estatais, como o Ministério da Cultura e o Ministério das Tecnologias da Informação e Comunicação.

Método: Abordagem qualitativa através de análise documental, entrevistas e observação.

Resultados e Discussão: São destacadas as experiências da Nasa Stereo e da Rádio Pa'yumat, rádios comunitárias do povo indígena Nasa, ressaltando os desafios técnicos, culturais e de segurança. Discute-se o papel desses meios de comunicação como agentes de paz e promotores da identidade cultural indígena no Cauca, com implicações para as políticas públicas.

Implicações da Pesquisa: Sublinha a necessidade de políticas que promovam a diversidade cultural e o pluralismo dos media em contextos pós-conflito, garantindo o acesso equitativo aos media, especialmente para populações marginalizadas, como os povos indígenas.

Originalidade/Valor: A investigação oferece um olhar aprofundado sobre o papel crucial da rádio comunitária na construção da paz em Cauca, Colômbia, com conclusões relevantes tanto académicas como relacionadas com políticas públicas que apoiam os meios de comunicação comunitários.

1 INTRODUCTION

The research presented is a continuation of a previous study on the impact of community radios in the promotion of the right to peace in rural areas of the Cauca Department. In the initial phase, a characterization of these broadcasters was carried out and the challenges for peacebuilding in this specific context were identified. The aim is now to examine in depth two fundamental aspects related to the role of these media.

The aim of this work was to establish an approach to the structure of community radios in the Department of Cauca, as well as to evaluate the strengthening of citizen, public and community media in the region. We sought to understand how these characteristics influence the promotion of pluralism, freedom of information and diversity, as well as the opening of communicative spaces for reconciliation, inclusion and citizen participation.

The justification for this study lies in the increasing relevance of communication and culture in the current technological context and global economic and social scenarios. Discussion on the rights to communication and culture is crucial to address issues such as freedom of expression and information, equitable access to media, and representative diversity in content and narratives. Therefore, this research seeks to provide knowledge that contributes to the recognition and strengthening of communicative and cultural diversity, as well as the promotion of a more inclusive and peaceful society in the Department of Cauca.

As a general objective of the project, it was explicitly intended to recognize and demonstrate the keys to sustainability of outstanding experiences of communication and culture in Cauca-Colombia led from and with community radio; as well as to highlight challenges and policy recommendations for the strengthening of such means as an input for the operationalization of peace agreements.

As for the specific objectives, they are detailed below: to describe and characterize outstanding experiences of communication and culture in the country, led from and by the media in municipalities belonging to the Special Transitional Circumscriptions of Peace; to identify lessons learned and sustainable working models in the communication-culture processes developed from the media in the territories, their problems, needs and realities and to generate recommendations for the formulation and updating of media policies from the communication-culture approach.
2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE POLICIES

Mastrini (2013) directly relates the emergence of communication policies to the evolution of the media, based on the need of the State to organize the ownership and responsibilities of the media, as well as to guarantee the right to information and communication from the production and access to media content. For Zallo (2011) cultural policies have to do with the set of interventions, objectives and strategies and the implementation of structures oriented to the satisfaction of cultural needs and the development of mechanisms for the production and symbolic circulation of societies.

Authors such as Rey (2010 and 2016), Zallo (2011), Martín Barbero (2010) have developed approaches in which the connections between communication and culture with the future of societies, daily life, the evolution and transformation of communication and information technologies and the industrial processes of massification and exchange of symbolic goods are recognized. Of course, the crossroads of communication and culture have been expressed in the institutional conformations of the states and in the play of tensions of the public and the private, insofar as the states make efforts to promote national identities, safeguard heritage, promote diversity, while giving rise to the entry of transnational communications that will participate as actors of local economies, also affecting consumption dynamics and cultural practices.

In the case of Colombia, institutional architecture shows these relationships, as well as their scope and limits. For example, since its inception, the Ministry of Culture has placed special emphasis on the recognition of communication as a field of culture with the very existence of the Communications Directorate and of policies and programs for the promotion and strengthening of public and community media as cultural managers, as well as the formulation of policies for the promotion of cultural enterprises of producers of traditional and digital media. For its part, the Ministry of Information and Communications Technologies (MinTic) develops programs to promote the appropriation of new technologies, in addition it has competence as a sectoral leader in the regulation of telecommunications in Colombia, which in turn affect the media ecosystem, production and consumption dynamics.

The importance of highlighting the relations and tensions between communication and culture policies, as well as generating analyzes that propose views and spaces for
intervention, says German Rey (2016) in the research on Communication and Culture Policies in Colombia, by staging how institutional management does not respond to the speed of transformations:

While it is true as evidenced by German Rey (2016) that communication and culture policies are increasingly determined by the market and global dynamics, it is necessary to insist on the duty of institutions to generate regulatory and policy frameworks oriented towards the guarantees of cultural and communicative rights and with them diversity and pluralism, access to the media and production and the promotion of participation mechanisms for the defense and guarantee of such rights.

Likewise, UNESCO has on several occasions expressed positions on the character of media and communication technologies by “having a direct effect on the cultural expressions of individuals, groups or societies, in particular the creation, production, dissemination and distribution of cultural activities and goods and services and access to them.” (UNESCO, 2005, p.5)

2.2 ACCESS VS CONCENTRATION

Access as seen from communication and culture policies is a right associated with access to information, media ownership, telecommunications services, and the production and circulation of symbolic cultural goods. For Zallo (2011) and authors such as Becerra and Mastrini (2016), access is a heated debate especially in Latin America, considering the growing trend of openness to capital in the region's economic models.

Accordingly, the concentration appears as a fundamental category of analysis in recent studies in Latin America and Colombia promoted by organizations such as Observacom97, the Foundation for Press Freedom – FLIP, Reporters Without Borders and Fecolper. The recent analysis published by Mastrini and Becerra (2016) shows how the phenomena of technological convergence have sharpened the concentration rates to the ownership of telecommunication services, hence that 4 companies dominate 95% of the market in the region; likewise, in the last years, for the case of Colombia, subscription and access to pay television has increased, which, for the most part, is in the hands of 4 companies that have 92% of the market.

For UNESCO, concentration influences the cultural and social dynamics of countries, affects the development of the media and democracy; this is stated in the document of indicators of media development (2008)101, as it could limit access to information, freedom
of expression, the diversity of actors involved in the production of media content, among other aspects. Likewise, UNESCO expresses the importance of access to the media as a fundamental aspect of freedom of expression as they constitute a “platform” to exercise this right.

UNESCO in 2005, expressed how cultural diversity refers to the multiplicity of ways in which the cultures of groups and societies are expressed. These expressions are transmitted within and between groups and societies. “Cultural diversity manifests itself not only in the various ways in which humanity’s cultural heritage is expressed, enriched and transmitted through the variety of cultural expressions, but also through different modes of artistic creation, production, dissemination, distribution and enjoyment of cultural expressions, whatever the means and technologies used.”

On the other hand, diversity as a cultural right is associated with freedom of expression, a right that implies guaranteeing the coexistence of diverse voices and social expressions. Pluralism is a notion also associated with diversity and freedom of expression, organizations such as UNESCO, the European System of Human Rights and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; they associate pluralism and diversity of media as part of the guarantee of freedom of expression (Téllez and Pérez at al. 2016).

From this point of view, several policies in Europe and Latin America are aimed at promoting the pluralism of the media system to promote diversity in the participation of actors and in the expression of content. In other words, the diversity of participation in media ownership has an impact on the diversity of cultural narratives.

2.3 PARTICIPATION AND DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE MASS MEDIA

As part of the implementation of the agreements of the peace process developed in Havana, a national space for participation was made for the formulation of guidelines in order to build the framework of a draft law for the guarantees of promotion of citizen participation and the exercise of the right to social mobilization and protest. This space was led by the Ministry of the Interior, the High Council for Peace, the National Council for Citizen Participation, and accompanied by the Swiss Embassy in Colombia, and organizations the Center for Research and Popular Education –CINEP-, the Corporation Viva la Ciudadanía and the National Forum Foundation for Colombia. The document Synthesis of the deliberation process in chapter 3 on Guarantees for citizen participation
through community, institutional and regional media, states that as a fundamental aspect of guarantees for citizen participation of social organizations and movements are “the recognition of the right to access to information, communication, freedom of expression and freedom of the press” and in this context, appears as a fundamental principle, the democratization of the media and “the development of measures for access to community, institutional and regional media by communities, organizations and social movements” (p. 29).102

Likewise, this document defines the need to have specific measures aimed at populations of special constitutional protection that start from an “ethnic, gender, differential approach for people with disabilities, among others, and that promotes affirmative actions for these populations.” In this section, it is proposed: that in the programming grids of institutional media a percentage of time is granted for organizations and movements of women, youth, LGBTI population, children, girls, adolescents, people with disability, unions, ethnic groups, peasant population and victims of armed conflict, so that they can spread their agendas without censorship or stigmatization.

It is proposed to establish an institutionalized strip of spaces on institutional and regional broadcasters and channels exclusively for gender issues and women's rights, to ensure women's access to written media and that their narratives are published. Special measures should also be put in place to ensure the participation and effective access of rural women to the media, through communal action boards and other forms of organization.

2.4 COMMUNITY MEDIA AND THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

As a vital aspect in this research, the social participation in the different actions carried out by community broadcasters in the contexts in which it is developed was taken into account, this is the one that gives life, focus and dynamism to community media, since it is the citizens, the inhabitants of that municipality or population who appropriate the community media, in this case the community broadcasters. Thus Carvalho, L. G. A. L. de, Cunha, F. L. de A., & Pereira, F. de S. (2024), “affirm that social participation arises from the need, struggle and achievement of people to have a voice in their own history, forging their own destiny in a dignified way.”

Community broadcasters have thus become the conflict and post-conflict in the replicators, intermediaries and communication channels that empower these voices, which
Experiences of Peace, Communication and Communication in the Community Radios of Cauca Colombia in Relation to Public Policies for its Strengthening in the Post-Conflict

distribute these stories and contribute to the improvement of the destinies of the people who are part of these forgotten places and abandoned by the Colombian State in Cauca.

2.5 COMMUNITY BROADCASTERS FROM A SOCIAL TECHNOLOGY (ST) PERSPECTIVE

We wanted to approach this study from a new and different perspective, using postulates that allow to reflect in a deeper way to community radios of Cauca, in this way, it was possible to obtain a more accurate approach to broadcasters, involving factors such as technology, the social field and its influence. The convergence of these two factors opened new paths of analysis and observation of this problem of this situation.

This is how André, M. V. de C., & Oliveira-Melo, F. G. (2024), in his text called: “Referential model for or process of development of social technologies” was used. In this article, the authors state the following: "the TS is developed in and for the community through the interaction of popular and scientific knowledge, with the aim of generating social inclusion and minimizing or mitigating problems in local communities", the above can account for the dynamics that are generated in community radios, where programming grids are found, especially in indigenous and peasant women, in which it combines ancestral knowledge with knowledge from capitalist contexts, obviously it is sought that the grids predominate ancestral knowledge and content, in the case of indigenous broadcasters.

3 METHODOLOGY

The character of the research is predominantly qualitative and seeks to generate understandings about its development and problems, specifically in relation to the current moment of the country. The methodological design is based on the information available and provided by both the Directorate of the Ministry of Culture, FLIP and the results of the research on the trajectory of communication-culture policies, cited above. These inputs constitute a baseline to understand the general landscape of community media and thus deepen the view from public policies, understandings of communication-culture and post-conflict contexts in the department of Cauca-Colombia. Tangentially, this study also allows a look at the new realities that the processes of media convergence for community radios
entail in the current media ecosystem. Methodological instruments have been used such as the survey, semi-structured interviews and in situ observation.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study has allowed until now, since the research continues, to reassess the outstanding experiences of communication and culture in Cauca specifically in the community radio stations Radio Pa'yumat and Nasa Stereo belonging to the Nasa indigenous people, where there are partial results of the research carried out in these stations and their population territory. Also detected were the priorities that in terms of presence and articulation with government institutions affect the development of media in these territories, as well as the identification of challenges, difficulties but also the strengths that these broadcasters must face in at least two ways: their presence as primary actors in the post-conflict and changes in the media ecosystem that force rethinking the ways of operation and the production of content.

It has been found in the research so far that the radio station Nasa Stereo 99.4 FM of the municipality of Toribío as an indigenous community media, reflects its indigenous and cultural conception of the Nasa people, where the media has an important role, inform and educate the population of three indigenous councils: Tacueyó, San Francisco and Toribio. Their work team is indigenous, they have a community radio experience of around 20 years, and their training has been self-taught and empirical, since they said they had not had the possibility of pursuing a technical or professional education.

The programming contents of its station are in two languages: Spanish and Nasa Yuwe, native language of the Nasa or Páez people, since its communicational ideal is the diffusion and preservation of the Nasa tradition that they have in their Life Plan (policies and concepts for the total scope of the welfare of the community) conceived in the Nasa Project to which they belong as indigenous people.

Likewise, it was sought to know the opinion of some inhabitants of Toribío about the radio medium, and it was found that they like the station and they manage to identify with the cultural and informative programming that they employ, they also manifested their fidelity with the medium and the participation that they have in it through telephone calls, text messages and the open mic interview, since everyone can give their point of view.
At a technical level they have the equipment and means necessary to transmit, but if it is detected that the equipment is old and that the medium does not know the existence and use of some digital tools, but still they do not refuse to learn from it if they had the opportunity.

Talking a little about the context in which the station is located, several anecdotes were known by the members of the station that have affected not only the medium but also their integrity as people, since the violence in this territory, the armed conflict where groups are outside the law such as the guerrillas of the Farc, Eln and Epl and also the proliferation of illicit crops has made the people have not had a optimal development. These illicit crops such as marijuana are harming the community, mainly because the interest of the young people of Toribío is inclined to defect to work with this plant and what worsens the situation is that consumption has increased in children and young people. This explains the smell of Cannabis that is perceived in the environment when you reach this municipality, and the hundreds of light bulbs that light up at night the greenhouses in the hills of this municipality. *Nasa Stereo then has the mission that through its frequency changes are generated and rescued that ancestral life plan that they have in their conception as Nasa people.*

The community radio station Radio Pa'yumat in Santander de Quilichao unlike *Nasa Stereo* is located in a municipality with greater economic and productive activity, since there are several national companies and sugar mills. The station with its radio frequency 101.0 FM reaches several municipalities of North Cauca thanks to its zonal coverage, they are: Santander de Quilichao, Caloto, Corinto, Miranda, Jambalo, Buenos Aires and Suarez.

The facilities of Radio Pa'yumat are spacious and adequate, but like Nasa Stereo have at a technical level the basics to transmit, and the use and mastery of digital tools do not have it, stating the production team their ignorance and lack of training in the subject.

The station uses both the Spanish language and the *Nasa Yuwe* language in its programming, and the contents are based on informing, educating and strengthening the culture of the *Nasa* people, one of its characteristics as a community medium is news information, so they seek to train young people from the indigenous councils who arrive with their frequency, to be correspondents of their environment, in order to have a greater approach to the community and that they are the ones who tell the reality of what happens in their territories. That is why programming in general establishes a direct connection with the community providing news, cultural entertainment, participation and opinion of them.
Peace as a concept for both broadcasters is born from inner peace, is cultivated in the home and its community, peace is beyond signing the agreements, and that is why they said that after the signing of the Agreements with the Farc, violence has decreased, but they have also had negative situations in their territory where they continue to be victims of the conflict because new armed groups dissident of the Farc have emerged with equal dynamics of terror and repression. A situation that links community radio stations in their struggle for human rights, free expression, equity and recognition of their community. They express their fear and uncertainty of going through the same violent events with deaths, clashes, attacks, such as the one that happened in Toribío with a ‘chiva Bomba’. But still they do not lose hope and enthusiasm to continue working towards a comprehensive peace for all their indigenous people and see their station as an opportunity to achieve it.

In the research carried out so far, it can be seen that the North of Cauca is a great source of knowledge and the work that these stations provide is noteworthy, since they are part of the conflict and yet they do not stop fighting to continue helping their population, without being afraid of threats with pamphlets, text messages and calls that they make for their work.

The creation of public policies that promote cultural diversity in the community media is also very relevant. This implies recognition and support for broadcasters that broadcast in indigenous languages and promote the preservation of local culture, thus contributing to the construction of an inclusive peace and respectful of Colombian cultural diversity.

The importance of creating public policies that provide institutional support to community radios was highlighted, especially in areas affected by the armed conflict in Cauca and Colombia. These could include the allocation of financial resources, accompaniments to their processes, technical training and logistical support to ensure the sustainable operation of the broadcasters.

This research allowed us to identify the need for public policies that promote access to updated, adequate technology and continuous training in its use. This includes financial support for upgrading technical equipment and training in digital tools to enable community radios to adapt to changes in the media ecosystem and improve their reach and transmission quality.

It was possible to establish through this research process the importance of implementing public policies that promote the participation and consultation of local communities in the formulation of policies related to community media. This would ensure
that policies are designed in an inclusive manner and respond to the real needs of communities, thereby strengthening the legitimacy and sustainability of community radios in the post-conflict era.

Public policies that guarantee the safety and protection of community communicators, especially in areas affected by violence and armed conflict in the department of Cauca. This could include measures to protect and prevent attacks against broadcasters and their staff, as well as the creation of mechanisms to report and address threats or violations of freedom of expression.

REFERENCES


Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa –FLIP– (2015) Tercera encuesta nacional a periodistas sobre la libertad de expresión y acceso a la información. Disponible en línea: http://flip.org.co/es/content/tercera-encuesta-nacional-periodistas-sobre-libertad-de-expresi%C3%B3n-y-acceso-la-informaci%C3%B3n


Reporteros sin fronteras por la libertad de información y FECOLPER. http://www.monitoreodemedios.co/por-que-importa-el-tema/
Experiences of Peace, Communication and Communication in the Community Radios of Cauca Colombia in Relation to Public Policies for its Strengthening in the Post-Conflict


