

ARTÍCULOS

THE ORIGINS OF THE *NÚCLEOS ESCOLARES CAMPESINOS* OR CLUSTERED SCHOOLS FOR PEASANTS IN PERU, 1945-1952.

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Abstract: This article analyzes the ideological and pedagogical factors that led to the establishment of the *núcleos escolares campesinos* or clustered schools for peasants in Peru. These schools were established by Peruvian authorities with financial and technical collaboration from the US government in the context of the Second World War and the early Cold War. Among the economic and social trends that characterized Peru during this period were emphasis on export-oriented growth, urbanization, commercialization of the rural economy, and increasing rural tensions. The ideologies that influenced the establishment of the *núcleos* were *Indigenismo*, contemporary pedagogical thought, action anthropology, and *Desarrollismo*. Peasant communities embraced the *núcleos* both as vehicles of social mobility and means to escape the demands of local bosses.

Keywords: Núcleo escolar campesino, rural school, peasant education, Good Neighbor Policy, Cold War, indigenismo, desarrollismo.

Title: LOS ORÍGENES DE LOS NÚCLEOS ESCOLARES CAMPESINOS EN EL PERÚ, 1945-1952.

Resumen: Este artículo analiza los factores ideológicos y pedagógicos que llevaron al establecimiento de los *núcleos escolares campesinos* en el Perú. Estos *núcleos* fueron establecidos por las autoridades peruanas con colaboración financiera y técnica del gobierno norteamericano en el contexto de la Segunda Guerra Mundial y la temprana Guerra Fría. Entre las tendencias económicas y sociales que caracterizaron al Perú durante este período estuvieron el énfasis en la economía orientada a la exportación, la urbanización, la comercialización de la agricultura rural, y crecientes tensiones en el campo. Las ideologías que influyeron en el establecimiento de los *núcleos* fueron el indigenismo, el pensamiento educativo contemporáneo, la antropología de la acción, y el desarrollismo. Las comunidades campesinas apoyaron los *núcleos* como vehículos de movilidad social y medios para escapar las demandas de los gamonales.

Palabras clave: Núcleo escolar campesino, escuela rural, educación campesina, Política del Buen Vecino, Guerra Fría, indigenismo, desarrollismo.

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1. Introducción

On April 14 1954 the dwellers of Ccorao – a village of about 400 hundred inhabitants located in the Department of Cuzco in southern Peru – inaugurated the new public primary school. In order to build and organize the school, the villagers had successfully requested financial and technical assistance from the Peruvian-North American Cooperative Education Service (SECPANE), which run the program of *núcleos escolares campesinos*, or clustered schools for peasants. The guests of the inauguration included the prefect of the departamento, the president of the public university of Cuzco, and the regional director of SECPANE. The inauguration program included the singing of the Peruvian national song by local parents and children, and speeches by the prefect and SECPANE's regional director. According to an educational officer in attendance, the climax of the ceremony was the address delivered by the village's leader Narciso Choque. The ceremony ended with the blessing of the new school by the priest of a nearby hamlet and with a lunch offered by the villagers.¹

The establishment of the school of Ccorao leads us to ponder three questions. First, the reasons why the Peruvian and United States governments decided to collaborate in the establishment of SECPANE. To answer this question I examine the national and international context in which this program was initiated, paying special attention to social and political factors. The second question is why SECPANE was organized the way it was. I analyze the ideological assumptions that underlay this educational program to reply to this question satisfactorily. Finally, I address SECPANE's early institutional and educational outcomes. I focus on the coincidences and divergences among the agendas of Peruvian authorities, US officers, and rural communities, to accomplish this goal. It is particularly important to understand why Peruvian peasants collaborated with SECPANE and sent their children to the *núcleos escolares campesinos*.

Scholars contemporary to SECPANE were mostly concerned about assessing the successes and failures of the program. They agreed that the *núcleos escolares* had accomplished some degree of success in increasing rural enrollment, fostering communal participation in educational and developmental activities, and modernizing some economic and social practices. They also agreed on SECPANE's failure to accomplish universal rural schooling and consistently provide early literacy in native languages, as well as overcoming a number of internal administrative problems and wholly modernizing communal economic activities.² Scholarship contemporary to SECPANE generally assumed the absolute validity of the cultural and educational goals of SECPANE without scrutinizing their ideological assumptions or relating them to broader intellectual currents like Indigenismo, developmentalism, and

¹ BRAVO RATTO, César. Ccorao. Un ensayo de educación fundamental. *América Indígena*, 1955, XV, 2, 124-125.

² DIAZ MONTENEGRO, Leopoldo. *Informe sobre los Núcleos Escolares 1946-1958*. Lima: Ministerio de Educación Pública – Servicio Cooperativo Peruano Norteamericano de Educación, 1959, 42-68. GIBSON, Raymond C. *Rural Schools of Peru. Peruvian – North American Cooperative Program in Rural Education*. Washington: US Department of Health, Education and Welfare – Office of Education, 1955, 20-21. BAUM, John. *Estudio sobre la educación rural en el Perú*, 2nd ed. Mexico: Centro Regional de Ayuda Técnica – Agencia Internacional para el Desarrollo, 1967, 68-71, 113-117, 142-143, and 149-150. PAULSTON, Rolland G. *Society, Schools and Progress in Peru*. Oxford – New York: Pergamon Press, 1971, 73-75.

anthropological thought. By focusing on the "failures" of SECPANE, the early scholarship neglected the question of why núcleos escolares worked the way they did. They neglected the impact of the interactions among Peruvian and American officers and local communities.

Since the 1970s the scholarship on the núcleos escolares has focused on explaining their origins and development. These works related the núcleos to elite projects of modernization, nation-building, and economic development. They also referred to the quantitative success of the núcleos, their administrative difficulties, and their limited pedagogical outcomes. Some of these works have tended to blame the "failures" of the núcleos on cultural factors like "internal colonialism" and secular contempt toward the indigenous population.³ A few others have done a better job relating the performance of núcleos campesinos to the expectations and claims of local communities, and the effects of broader social and economic problems like indigenous demands for land and rural migration to the cities⁴. Similar to early scholarship, later works have not provided an exhaustive analysis of the ideological premises that underpinned SECPANE and the participation of the US in the program. Although it is undeniable that the performance of núcleos escolares was influenced by cultural issues, the recent scholarship has tended to disregard the equally important impact of political factors.

I will show that Peruvian authorities established the núcleos escolares in order to prepare the Indigenous population to become productive, disciplined and modern rural workers. Peasant education would contribute both to the internal and export-oriented economies, prevent rural outmigration, and palliate rural conflicts. American authorities collaborated with SECPANE to strengthen links with Peru, encourage economic development, and foster social and political stability. In addition to *Indigenismo*, the early organization of the núcleos escolares was also inspired by contemporary pedagogical thought, action anthropology, and *Desarrollismo*. Some peasant communities embraced the núcleos as a vehicle of social mobility and a means to escape traditional gamonal demands.

2. The creation of SECPANE and the núcleos escolares campesinos

In the late 1930s and early 1940s Peru was going through a number of economic, social, and political changes that contributed to the interest of national authorities in establishing SECPANE and the núcleos escolares. The exportation of raw materials continued being the most profitable economic activity but import shortages early during the Second World War (1939-45) contributed to a modest growth of the manufacturing sector. The rural economy was becoming gradually and unevenly commercialized in those places with linkages to the export economy or growing urban demand.⁵ In demographic terms, the population of Peru was growing

³ EPSTEIN, Erwin H. Education and *Peruanidad*: Internal Colonialism in the Peruvian Highlands. *Comparative Educational Review*, 1971, 2, 15, 193. FELL, Eve-Marie. Les "Núcleos Escolares Campesinos": un échec révélateur. En: Université des Langues et Lettres de Grenoble, *L'enfant et l'adolescent dans les pays andins: actes du 6e colloque, Association française pour l'étude et la recherche sur les pays andins, A.F.E.R.P.A., Bordeaux, 21, 22 et 23 janvier 1984*. Grenoble: Imprimerie de l'Université des langues et lettres de Grenoble, 1984, 113-114.

⁴ CONTRERAS, Carlos. *Maestros, mistis y campesinos en el Perú rural del siglo XX*. Documento de Trabajo No. 80. Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1996, 26-27.

⁵ KLAREN, Peter F. *Peru. Society and Nationhood in the Andes*. New York – Oxford: Oxford University

and it was still predominantly rural, but there was a pattern of accelerated urbanization.⁶ In the highlands, economic commercialization, growing population in some places, and rural outmigration in others, made conflicts over land and labor more frequent and violent. *Gamonales* (large-landowners and local political bosses) encroached upon the plots of smaller landholders and peasant communities. *Gamonales* also tried to turn tenants (*colonos* and *yanaconas*) and shepherds (*huacchilleros*) into low-wage laborers, restricting or eradicating their traditional access to agricultural and grazing lands. Sometimes rural outmigration diffused tensions between landlords and peasants, but in other cases it caused labor shortages. Outmigration did not prevent rural turmoil and peasant mobilization: communities and tenants resisted proletarianization and land usurpation and, especially since 1945, they carried on successive invasions of disputed lands.⁷

In political terms, since the presidency of General Oscar R. Benavides (1933) the national government expanded the state apparatus, increased fiscal expenditure, and tried to assert its power over the interior of the country. The authorities based in Lima had to maintain good relationships with regional and local political bosses, but the expansion and strengthening of the state slowly eroded the political and economic power of *gamonales*. Since the early 1930s the national political elite predominantly favored a greater state intervention in society and the economy. The government increased public investments, built up infrastructure (especially roads and schools), and created more bureaucratic jobs to guarantee material progress, social stability, and national cohesion. As a consequence the national government achieved more effective control over the provinces, which in turn became more economically dependent on the government based in Lima.⁸

In the early 1940s the Peruvian government had economic, social, and political motivations to use education as a means to increase rural productivity, improve the conditions of peasants without redistributing land, and bringing the indigenous population closer to the nation-state. Nevertheless, the interest of Peruvian national authorities in providing education specifically geared toward the Indians had already emerged in the first decades of the twentieth century. Three educational experiences that immediately preceded SECPANE deepen our understanding of the reasons why Peruvian authorities began the program of *núcleos escolares*. In 1929 the

Press, 2000, 282-285, 293. RENIQUE, José Luis. *Los sueños de la sierra. Cusco en el siglo XX*. Lima: CEPES, 1991, 146-147.

⁶ In 1940 the rate of population growth was 1.9%, ten years later it had risen to 2.2%, and by 1961 it had increased to 2.7%. According to the 1940 census 65% of the population lived in rural areas. Rural population had grown from 1.6 million in 1876 to 4 million in 1940, and it rose to 5.2 million in 1961. Between 1940 and 1961 the urban population increased three times that of the rural one; in the same period the highland population dropped from 60% to 41% while the coastal population had grown from 34% to 39%. See: KLAREN, Peter F. *Peru. Society and Nationhood in the Andes*. New York – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 294, 316. PORTOCARRERO MAISCH, Gonzalo. *De Bustamante a Odría. El fracaso del Frente Democrático Nacional 1945-1950*. Lima: Moscal Azul Editores, 1983, 11, 98.

⁷ KLAREN, Peter F. *Peru. Society and Nationhood in the Andes*. New York – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 293-294, 302, 311.

⁸ PORTOCARRERO, MAISCH, Gonzalo. *De Bustamante a Odría. El fracaso del Frente Democrático Nacional 1945-1950*. Lima: Moscal Azul Editores, 1983, 13, 20-23, 30-31, 46, 48-49, 124-125. RENIQUE, José Luis. *Los sueños de la sierra. Cusco en el siglo XX*. Lima: CEPES, 1991, 36, 130. KLAREN, Peter F. *Peru. Society and Nationhood in the Andes*. New York – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 291, 311-312.

government established the *Granja Escolar* or farm school "Salcedo" (Puno), a boarding institution for Indian teenagers that taught vocational training in agricultural and livestock-raising techniques, and also literacy. Salcedo was administered by the Catholic order of the Salesians; it was expected to isolate the interns from the alleged "negative" influence of their native environment while at the same time "civilizing" them through a military-style discipline and strict Christian morale. National elites implicitly assumed that the native environment encouraged laziness, ignorance, and lack of patriotism. In 1939 the government established *brigadas de culturización indígena* – these brigadas were mobile teams that taught literacy, civic education, and productive techniques to adults in the countryside. These mobile teams sought to educate Indians within their communities to take advantage of their traditional cooperative spirit and to discourage them from migrating to the cities. National elites perceived the growing rural outmigration as an undesirable trend that left the countryside without labor force and worsened urban problems. The brigadas were expected to preserve Indian language and art while promoting modern habits and creating new associative institutions parallel to the traditional ones.⁹

The third educational experience that predated the Peruvian núcleos was that of the "nuclear" and "satellite" schools for Indian children that the Bolivian government established in 1936. The goals of these schools were turning the Indians into productive peasants, and keeping them in the rural areas, while protecting them from the harmful impact of their environment. The satellite schools provided primary instruction while the nuclear schools were boarding establishments that offered vocational training in agricultural, livestock-raising, and manufacturing techniques adequate to rural areas. The most renowned of the nuclear schools came to be the school of Warisata, a community located north of La Paz, close to Lake Titicaca.¹⁰

These three educational experiences that preceded the Peruvian núcleos escolares had important similarities. The main goal of the three projects was preparing the Indians to fulfill the role of productive and disciplined rural workers. In all cases there was concern over the lack of sufficient and adequately-trained labor for rural production, during a period in which there was increased social conflict and growing outmigration. Both Salcedo and the brigadas were expected to integrate or bring Indians into the Peruvian national community, and the nuclear schools in Bolivia sought to do the same. The three projects taught literacy, formally enabling their graduates to become potential voters, even though only the brigadas provided civic education too. The Salcedo and Bolivian nuclear schools attempted to isolate the Indian students from their milieus to protect them from deleterious effects. In contrast,

⁹ FELL, Eve-Marie. Réalités de l'Éducation Indigène au Pérou: Le Cas Salcedo. En: Université de Tours – Equipe de recherches hispaniques, *Ecole et société en Espagne et en Amérique latine (XVIIIe – Xxe siècles)*. Tours: Université de Tours, 1983, 119-133. INFANTE, Luis C. *Progress of Education in Peru during the year 1941-1942*. Lima: Imprenta Ariel, 1942, 18.

¹⁰ LARSON, Brooke. Capturing Indian Bodies, Hearths, and Minds. The Gendered Politics of Rural School Reform in Bolivia, 1920s-1940s. En: ANDREW CANESSA, (ed.) *Natives Making Nation: Gender, Indigeneity, and the State in the Andes*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2005, 39-40, 44-45. In 1936 the Peruvian and Bolivian governments signed an agreement to share information about any legislation, reform, or study related to the indigenous population that each country passed or prepared. They also concurred on exchanging educators specialized on Indian education. "Convenio sobre Estudios y Legislación Sociales e Indígenas celebrado entre el Perú y Bolivia," September 14, 1936. REPUBLICA DEL PERU. Dirección General de Asuntos Indígenas, *Legislación Indigenista del Perú*. Lima: Talleres Gráficos de la Penitenciaría Central, 1948, 57-59.

the Peruvian brigadas and the Bolivian satellite schools – like the *núcleos escolares* later -- tried to educate the Indians inside their communities to impact them collectively and to encourage traditions such as cooperative spirit and native art which political and educational authorities considered positive.

Although there already existed a Peruvian interest in promoting rural education, the original planning of the *núcleos escolares* was an initiative of the US government through the Office of Inter-American Affairs (OIA) and its subsidiaries the Institute of Inter-American Affairs (IIA) and the Institute of Inter-American Education (IIE). US authorities created the OIA in 1940 as part of the Good Neighbor policy; its general goals were deepening US influence in Latin America, countering the influence of the Axis powers in the region, fostering "Hemispheric Solidarity", and contributing to the economic stability and social development of the Latin American countries.¹¹ As part of this effort, OIA devised a program of educational collaboration based on bilateral diplomatic agreements between the US government and its Latin American peers. The objectives of this program were making Latin Americans familiar with the US political system and educational achievements, preparing more of them for citizenship, raising living standards in the countries of the region and creating potential markets for the postwar period.¹²

In addition to the internal factors that predisposed them to establish the *núcleos escolares campesinos*, both the administrations of Manuel Prado and José Luis Bustamante y Rivero had positive relations with the US. Prado was a close ally of the US government during the Second World War, providing diplomatic, economic, and military collaboration. Bustamante y Rivero, a convinced democrat, admired the political system of the US and also hoped for renewed North-American financial credit and direct investments. The US, in turn, valued Bustamante's moderation and the anti-communism of APRA, which was part of the government.¹³ On April 4, 1944 Prado's administration signed the basic agreement to establish a cooperative educational program with the US. A year later, on April 20, 1945, Peruvian and North-American authorities agreed on the initial funds that each country would contribute to the joint program: the US provided US\$ 172.000 and Peru contributed US\$ 82.000.¹⁴

Finally, the Servicio Cooperativo Peruano-Norteamericano, or SECPANE, was formally established on January 4, 1946, under the administration of Bustamante. One of the outstanding items of the agreement was that the director of SECPANE

¹¹ In 1946 the OIA was abolished and its subsidiaries were transferred to the State Department. For a general overview of the Good Neighbor Policy (1933-1947) see SMITH, Peter H. *Talons of the Eagle. Latin, the United States, and the World*, 3rd ed. New York - Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 65-79. On the OIA see CRAMER, Gisela and PRUTSCH, Ursula. Nelson A. Rockefeller's Office of Inter-American Affairs (1940-1946) and Record Group 229. *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 2006, 86, 4, 785-787.

¹² *Acta Final de la Primera Conferencia de Ministros y Directores de Educación de las Repúblicas Americanas. 27 de Septiembre al 4 de Octubre de 1943*. Panama, Republic of Panama. Washington DC: Unión Panamericana, 1943, 15. HOLLAND, Kenneth. Inter-American Educational Relations. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 1944, 235, 71-72. DAVIS, Harold. Permanent Basis of Inter-American Education. *The English Journal*, 1945, 34, 4, 212.

¹³ KLAREN, Peter F. *Peru. Society and Nationhood in the Andes*. New York – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 292. PORTOCARRERO, MAISCH, Gonzalo. *De Bustamante a Odría. El fracaso del Frente Democrático Nacional 1945-1950*. Lima: Mosca Azul Editores, 1983, 138-143.

¹⁴ "Establecimiento del Servicio Cooperativo Peruano-Norteamericano de Educación". REPUBLICA DEL PERU, 265.

would always be an American officer. The other functionaries of the program, whether North-American or Peruvian, would be jointly appointed by SECPANE's director and the Peruvian Minister of Education. There would also be an office inside the ministry in charge of coordinating between the Peruvian executive and the program.¹⁵

3. The organization and evolution of the Núcleos Escolares

It is necessary to analyze the ideological assumptions on which núcleos escolares were based to understand their organization. The existing scholarship has focused mainly on Indigenismo, which was certainly the most prominent ideology among those that influenced the núcleos, and perhaps the most complex of them too.¹⁶ The political circumstances in which SECPANE was established allowed Indigenista intellectuals to introduce many of their ideas into the núcleos. But there were at least three other ideologies that impacted the design and performance of núcleos escolares: desarrollismo, the pedagogical thought of the time, and action anthropology.

A núcleo escolar campesino was a group or cluster of fifteen to twenty schools which cooperated with each other and were located in areas of dense Indian population that were homogeneous in terms of language, customs, and occupations. The most strategically located school was appointed as the "central" or "main" one and the others were called "sectional schools." At the beginning of the program, the central school provided the first two grades of primary instruction, while the sectional schools offered the first grade and only exceptionally the second one. By 1954 central schools taught complete primary instruction – grades one to five – while sectional schools only provided the first three grades. The director of the núcleo and the supervisors of literacy education, health education and services, and agricultural and industrial training, were all based in the central school.¹⁷ The system of núcleos escolares began in 1947 with 16 clusters located in the *departamentos* (regions) of Cuzco (4) and Puno (12).¹⁸ By 1952 there were 22 núcleos with 37,000 enrolled students in these same two departamentos; ten years later the number of núcleos had increased to 73 (with a total of 2416 schools), and the enrollment had grown to 200,000.¹⁹

¹⁵ "Establecimiento del Servicio Cooperativo", 264-270.

¹⁶ Among the various available definitions of Indigenismo the one provided by Laura Gotkowitz seems to be the most comprehensive and sophisticated one: "...field of dispute over national identity, regional power, and rights that places "Indians" at the center of politics, jurisprudence, social policy, or study. A fundamental element concerns the granting of special status to Indians or Indian communities, but such a recognition has no univocal meaning." See: GOTKOWITZ, Laura. *A Revolution for our Rights. Indigenous Struggles for Land and Justice in Bolivia, 1880-1952*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007, 44.

¹⁷ "Reglamento de los Núcleos Escolares Campesinos", May 9, 1947, REPUBLICA DEL PERU, 284-286. GIBSON, Raymond C. *Rural Schools of Peru. Peruvian – North American Cooperative Program in Rural Education*. Washington: US Department of Health, Education and Welfare – Office of Education, 1955, 5-6.

¹⁸ GARCIA, José Zebedeo. *Núcleos Escolares. Informe sobre el programa de educación rural*. Perú. Lima: Ministerio de Educación Pública – Servicio Cooperativo Peruano Norteamericano de Educación – División de Educación Rural, 1949, 8, 51. Thomas Davies mistakenly states that there also were núcleos in Pasco, Huánuco, and Junín; apparently SECPANE had activities there but not clustered schools. See: DAVIES, Thomas J. *Indian Integration in Peru. A Half Century of Experience, 1900-1948*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1974, 151.

¹⁹ PINILLA, Antonio. Los Núcleos Escolares Rurales en el Perú. *América Indígena*, 1952, XII, 3, 230-231. PAULSTON, Rolland G. Society, *Schools and Progress in Peru*. Oxford – New York: Pergamon

Several Indigenista intellectuals and educators participated of the planning and initial organization of the *núcleos escolares*. Among these were Luis Eduardo Valcárcel, José María Arguedas, Jorge Basadre, and Emilio Barrantes, who all joined the Bustamante administration attracted by the democratic, reformist, and pro-indigenous rhetoric of the regime. Since 1940 Indigenismo was gradually incorporated into the state ideological apparatus in Peru and other Latin American countries. They participated in the First Interamerican Indigenista Congress celebrated in Pátzacuaro (México) in 1940. In 1946 President Bustamante founded the Instituto Indigenista Peruano (Peruvian Indigenista Institute) and placed it under the direction of Valcárcel.²⁰

The Indigenistas implemented a number of their ideas in the *núcleos escolares campesinos*. Among these was a concern over the integration of the indigenous population into the national community while officially rehabilitating some aspects of their traditional culture such as teaching Spanish without eradicating native languages.²¹ For Indigenista intellectual José María Arguedas, teaching literacy exclusively in Spanish represented a method of imposition which provided an imperfect and ineffective education to Indians who may ultimately read but not understand. For Arguedas, teaching literacy in native languages was more effective and asserted the indigenous cultural personality. One of the peculiarities of the *núcleos escolares campesinos* was that they first taught indigenous children to read in Quechua or Aymara, gradually introducing Spanish words and expressions.²²

The Indigenistas considered that the Indian problem was complex and multifaceted and it required an all encompassing approach. According to the agreement that Peruvian and Bolivian educational authorities signed in November 1945, during a meeting sponsored by the Institute of Inter-American Education: "The Indian problem is constituted by conditions that are social, economic, sanitary, transportational, agrarian, educational, juridical, etc., in nature, and to their solution, all branches of both governments must bend every effort."²³

Press, 1971, 74.

²⁰ This congress recommended the establishment of the *Instituto Indigenista Latinoamericano* (Latin American Indigenista Institute) a regional entity legally based on an international convention and sustained by the contributions of the signatory countries. Its responsibilities were encouraging and coordinating Indigenista policies in the Americas. The signatories were committed to establishing national Indigenist institutes to support the study of native populations and to contribute to the amelioration of their conditions. OSTERLING, Jorge P. and MARTINEZ, Héctor. Notes for a History of Peruvian Social Anthropology, 1940-80. *Current Anthropology*, 1983, 24, 3, 344-345. RENIQUE, José Luis. *Los sueños de la sierra. Cusco en el siglo XX*. Lima: CEPES, 1991, 169.

²¹ Concern over Indian integration was broadly shared by Peruvian politicians at least since the administration of Augusto Leguía (1919-1930), including presidents General Oscar Benavides (1933-39) and Manuel Prado (1939-45). See: DAVIES, Thomas J. *Indian Integration in Peru. A Half Century of Experience, 1900-1948*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1974, 121-130.

²² For Arguedas' point of view see CONTRERAS, Carlos. *Maestros, mistis y campesinos en el Perú rural del siglo XX*. Documento de Trabajo No. 80. Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1996, 22-23. About the teaching of literacy in *núcleos escolares* see "Reglamento...", REPUBLICA DEL PERU, 285 and GARCIA, José Zebedeo. *Núcleos Escolares. Informe sobre el programa de educación rural*. Perú. Lima: Ministerio de Educación Pública – Servicio Cooperativo Peruano Norteamericano de Educación – División de Educación Rural, 1949, 45-46.

²³ "Texto del convenio firmado por los Ministros de Educación del Perú y Bolivia en Arequipa," November 1, 1945, REPUBLICA DEL PERU, 73. See also GIBSON, Raymond C. *Rural Schools of Peru. Peruvian – North American Cooperative Program in Rural Education*. Washington: US

Education had to be constant and comprehensive partly because it had to overcome the negative influence of the indigenous environment. The amelioration of the living conditions of the Indians required state intervention both at the level of the peasant community and the *hogar campesino* (peasant household).²⁴ To achieve this far-reaching purpose the núcleos escolares taught children modern agricultural techniques, which included the use of agricultural tools, seeds, and fertilizers. They also provided training in livestock-raising training, including cross-breeding of sheep to improve their meat and yarn. Hygiene instructors inculcated “cleanliness habits” such as regular baths, using soap and toothpaste, combing hair and getting haircuts. These instructors were also to encourage the vaccination of children and adults at the central schools.²⁵

The ultimate goal of this wide-ranging approach was turning the Indians into efficient producers of food staples and raw materials, and westernized consumers. Preparing the Indians to become citizens was a secondary priority, as Emilio Vásquez stated when referring to the Peruvian educational code of 1941: it aimed toward preparing the Indians for agricultural labor first, small industrial production secondly, and then for knowledge that would allow them to become full citizens. In Warisata in 1945 Peruvian and Bolivian educators recognized that the concern over training the Indians to be reliable rural workers and consumers was motivated by increasing rural outmigration and growing urbanization. Interestingly, training Indians for rural labor was a goal that Peruvian Indigenista intellectuals shared with oligarchic organizations like the Alianza Nacional party, which published its economic and political program in 1948.²⁶ Exceptionally, progressive educator Emilio Barrantes thought that although most Indians lived off agricultural labor, education did not necessarily have to perpetuate this situation. According to Barrantes, education helped develop the skills of indigenous students and granted them the same opportunity to choose any occupations.²⁷

Since the early 1940s Indigenismo was complemented by "desarrollismo" or developmentalism. This was an ideology that sought to integrate Indians into the national community through administrative and economic modernization, leaving

Department of Health, Education and Welfare – Office of Education, 1955, 5. Luis E. Valcárcel, Peruvian Minister of Education in late 1945, claimed many years later that he had personally called on the meetings because Bolivia "... had problems similar" to those of Peru. VALCARCEL, Luis E. *Memorias*. Lima: IEP, 1981, 351.

²⁴ This was the position of Peruvian Minister of Education Jorge Basadre and Director of Primary Education Uladislao Zegarra, who prepared a preliminary plan of rural education in mid-1945 which contained some of the seeds of the núcleos. It was a position shared by educators like Emilio Barrantes. BASADRE, Jorge. *La Vida y la historia. Ensayos sobre personas, lugares y problemas*, 2nd ed. Lima: Industrialgráfica, 1981, 705-707. BARRANTES, Emilio. Conceptos Fundamentales sobre la Educación del Indio. *América Indígena*, 1944, IV, 1, 49-54.

²⁵ GARCIA, José Zebedeo. *Núcleos Escolares. Informe sobre el programa de educación rural*. Perú. Lima: Ministerio de Educación Pública – Servicio Cooperativo Peruano Norteamericano de Educación – División de Educación Rural, 1949, 41-45.

²⁶ VASQUEZ, Emilio. Preparación del Magisterio Rural. *América Indígena*, 1943, III, 2, 177. "Conferencia de Maestros Peruanos y Bolivianos de Huarisata (Bolivia)," REPUBLICA DEL PERU, 261. VASQUEZ, Emilio. Nuevo Significado del Magisterio Rural. *América Indígena*, 1944, IV, 1, 76. The program of Alianza Nacional is quoted in PORTOCARRERO, MAISCH, Gonzalo. *De Bustamante a Odría. El fracaso del Frente Democrático Nacional 1945-1950*. Lima: Moscal Azul Editores, 1983, 202.

²⁷ BARRANTES, Emilio. Conceptos Fundamentales sobre la Educación del Indio. *América Indígena*, 1944, 53.

ethnic and cultural vindications aside. Desarrollismo encouraged the Peruvian state to increase its presence in the rural areas fostering development by technical and scientific means, and education was an ideal instrument to accomplish these. With advice from UN and US officers, Limeño technocrats and provincial Indigenistas viewed peasant demands as capitalistic forces that had to be fostered through institutional changes, credit, technological innovations, and education, gradually and peacefully eroding the traditional latifundia and modernizing the countryside.²⁸ After the Cuban Revolution, the US government turned desarrollismo into a counter-insurgency policy in Latin America; the idea was that the formation of a stable middle class would prevent another Communist uprising. In 1960 the Eisenhower administration committed 500 million dollars to Latin America to foster social and economic progress. The policy became even more determined under the Kennedy administration and the Alliance for Progress.²⁹

Another ideology that had a crucial influence on the organization of the *núcleos escolares campesinos* was the pedagogical thought of the time. Since the early 1940s, the Peruvian state consistently increased public investment in education, building up new infrastructure, preparing and hiring more teachers, and raising their salaries.³⁰ Political and educational officers expected teachers to embrace the role of public officers who represented the state inside local communities, and contributed to the achievement of official goals.³¹ Following American pedagogical thought, Emilio Vásquez considered that the rural teacher had to become a "social leader" in the rural areas. He added that the teacher had to become a carrier of "Peruvian educational ideals, turning Peru into a country for Peruvians." Emilio Barrantes added that successful Indian education required "little apostles" – in contrast to mere mediocre instructors with limited goals and obsessed over methods.³²

The Peruvian and Bolivian educators who laid down the basis for the *núcleos escolares* in 1945 broadly followed "functional education" and "descriptive psychology." According to the Andean educators, these two Western approaches were applicable because the indigenous child was a human being subject to the same laws of psychological, biological and social development as other human beings – this was what made them "educable and fit for an integral and harmonious

²⁸ RENIQUE, José Luis. *Los sueños de la sierra. Cusco en el siglo XX*. Lima: CEPES, 1991, 141-142, 145; 229-231.

²⁹ RENIQUE, José Luis. *Los sueños de la sierra. Cusco en el siglo XX*. Lima: CEPES, 1991, 169, 190-191.

³⁰ In 1945 Congress increased teachers' salaries up to 60%. In 1950 public educational spending represented 1.6% of the GDP and 14% of the national budget; by 1960 these percentages had risen to 2.6% and 18.3% respectively. During Fernando Belaunde's presidency (1963-68) educational spending was one of the highest of Latin America, representing 5% of the GDP and 25% of the national budget. See: PORTOCARRERO, MAISCH, Gonzalo. *De Bustamante a Odría. El fracaso del Frente Democrático Nacional 1945-1950*. Lima: Moscal Azul Editores, 1983, 112. KLAREN, Peter F. *Peru. Society and Nationhood in the Andes*. New York – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 328, 333.

³¹ The Peruvian and Bolivian educators who met in Warisata in late 1945 encouraged their governments to motivate rural teachers by providing them sufficient salaries fit to the difficult living and working conditions in the countryside. "Conferencia de Maestros Peruanos y Bolivianos," REPUBLICA DEL PERU, 263.

³² VASQUEZ, Emilio. Preparación del Magisterio Rural. *América Indígena*. 1943, vol. III, no. 2, 175, 177. VASQUEZ, Emilio. Nuevo Significado del Magisterio Rural en el Perú. *América Indígena*. 1944, vol. IV, no. 1, 76. BARRANTES, Emilio. Conceptos Fundamentales sobre la Educación del Indio. *América Indígena*, 1944, 50-51.

pedagogical evolution." Functional education was a pedagogical philosophy that focused on the child's psychology and his or her natural and social environments. Therefore, teachers needed to study their students from a psychological, biological, and social perspective, calibrating and adapting their school activities according to their findings. It was particularly important to proportion the knowledge imparted to children according to their mental capacity. Teachers also had to do basic research on the geography, history, language, society, folklore, and economy of the communities where they taught, to prepare their study plans. Barrantes claimed that educators had to consider the "telluric force" of the students' native region as part of the educational process.³³

Descriptive psychology encouraged educators to make students and communities "take interest" on the contents that they taught. This was linked to the idea that the school did not merely prepare students for life but was part of life itself. School programs, lessons, and activities had to be "vital and functional" rather than "bookish or dogmatic". Lessons, in particular, had to be "pieces of life" that developed the natural capacities of children through observation and experimentation.³⁴ In 1952 Antonio Pinilla explained that one of the methods that núcleos escolares used was "objective demonstration." For instance, to encourage the use of new seeds teachers went to a specific community, called the local officers and all of those peasants interested, and sowed both the seeds traditionally used and the ones brought by the teachers. The teachers returned to the community once the peasants themselves had had the chance to assess the advantages of the new seed.³⁵

The importance granted to practical education and the broader goal of turning Indians into productive peasants, led educators to criticize what they considered to be an intellectualist stance. Some educators censored the assumption that literacy was all that Indians needed while others questioned its usefulness for Indians. Atilio Sivirichi, an Indigenista author, criticized President Manuel Prado's educational program because it taught arithmetic, reading, and writing to Indians. Sivirichi considered that the indigenous population would have much more use for subjects like sanitation, patriotism, racial equality and pride in ancestry.³⁶ Emilio Vásquez criticized the emphasis on teaching literacy to Indians because it alienated them from their milieu. According to Vásquez, literate Indians tended to believe that they had reached a different social category, distancing themselves from their family and their community. For Vásquez, the Indian was destined to become a useful element within the social environment where he had to develop.³⁷

³³ "Conferencia de Maestros Peruanos y Bolivianos," REPUBLICA DEL PERU, 258-260. PINILLA, Antonio. Los Núcleos Escolares Rurales en el Perú. *América Indígena*, 1952, 231. BARRANTES, Emilio. Conceptos Fundamentales sobre la Educación del Indio. *América Indígena*, 1944, 53.

³⁴ REPUBLICA DEL PERU, 260. PINILLA, Antonio. Los Núcleos Escolares Rurales en el Perú. *América Indígena*, 1952, 228.

³⁵ PINILLA, Antonio. Los Núcleos Escolares Rurales en el Perú. *América Indígena*, 1952, 228-229.

³⁶ Sivirichi also thought that teachers should avoid reference to national problems and focus instead on the great men of Peruvian history and their deeds. SIVIRICHI, Atilio. *Derecho Indígena Peruano: proyecto de legislación indígena*. Lima: Kuntur, 1946, 453, 426-63, quoted in DAVIES JR, Thomas M. *Indian Integration in Peru. A Half Century of Experience, 1900-1948*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1974, 134. For general comments on the insufficiency of teaching literacy to Indians see VASQUEZ, Emilio. Preparación del Magisterio Rural. *América Indígena*. 1943, vol. III, no. 2, 177. BARRANTES, Emilio. Conceptos Fundamentales sobre la Educación del Indio. *América Indígena*, 1944, 52.

³⁷ VASQUEZ, Emilio. Nuevo Significado del Magisterio Rural en el Perú. *América Indígena*. 1944, vol.

Anthropology was another ideology that influenced the initial organization of *núcleos escolares* in addition to Indigenismo, desarrollismo, and educational thought. The professionalization of social anthropology in Peru, which began in the early 1930s, received a boost in the 1940s with the arrival of several American anthropologists involved in the preparation of the *Handbook of South American Indians*. This project, sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution and the US Department of State, employed several Peruvian academics.³⁸ Two closely related concepts that anthropological thought contributed to social policy in Peru in the 1940s were "action anthropology" and "strategic intervention." Both ideas held that social scientists could contribute to improve the living conditions of communities subject to study, after doing research on their characteristics. In an article published in *América Indígena*, the official journal of the Pan-American Indigenista Institute, Sol Tax compared the action anthropologist to a clinician: he had to move into the community, diagnose its problems, and treat it. For Tax, the basic problem that action anthropology had to face was community organization and his main tool to deal with it was education. It was through education that the action anthropologist could affect a total situation.³⁹

Another anthropological concept that had an impact on the organization of the *núcleos escolares* was that of "transculturation." This was first elaborated by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz in 1940. It meant that one culture gradually adopted the elements of a new one, slowly losing its traditional ideas and practices, and finally leading to the emergence of a new culture. According to Antonio Pinilla, the *núcleos escolares* sought the transculturation of the indigenous population rather than its acculturation. It was necessary to discard the assumption that the Indian mentality was a "tabula rasa" and to study the indigenous psychology, ideas about life, habits, tastes, interests, and preferences. Once this was done, it would be possible to encourage the Indians to accept Western civilization "freely."⁴⁰

Indigenismo, desarrollismo, educational thought, and anthropological thought, were the four ideologies contributed to the initial organization of the *núcleos escolares*. Indigenismo and desarrollismo wanted to bring the indigenous population closer into the national community, and both considered that the state could accomplish this goal through the constant and comprehensive effect of public education. Rural schooling also had to modernize the indigenous population by providing training in up to date agricultural and livestock-raising techniques. The ultimate goal of both Indigenismo and desarrollismo was to turn the Indians into modern producers and consumers. The other two ideologies that initially influenced *núcleos escolares* were pedagogical and anthropological thought. Both contributed to the idea that the educator had to understand the psychological and social characteristics of the peasant communities where he developed his activities and then transform them. Pedagogical thought also criticized an intellectualist emphasis on rural education, favoring instead a program that focused on the social and

IV, no. 1, 74.

³⁸ OSTERLING, Jorge P. and MARTINEZ, Héctor. Notes for a History of Peruvian Social Anthropology, 1940-80. *Current Anthropology*, 1983, 344.

³⁹ TAX, Sol. Action Anthropology. *América Indígena*, 1952, XII, 2, 103-105. Strategic intervention was the basis for the Peru-Cornell project in the community of Vicos (Ancash). See OSTERLING, Jorge P. and MARTINEZ, Héctor. Notes for a History of Peruvian Social Anthropology, 1940-80. *Current Anthropology*, 1983, 345.

⁴⁰ PINILLA, Antonio. Los Núcleos Escolares Rurales en el Perú. *América Indígena*, 1952, 226-227.

economic role that Indians were destined to fulfill.

4. Converging and diverging agendas

It is necessary to study the responses of rural communities to understand the quantitative and qualitative outcomes of the núcleos escolares. Using the available primary sources, it is possible to examine three issues. The first of them is the goals that rural parents had for sending their children to school. The official purpose of the núcleos was to transform indigenous children into productive rural workers. The available evidence does not deny that parents may have shared this goal, but it seems to indicate that social mobility was a more important objective for them. The second issue is the political leverage that SECPANE had at the regional and local levels, as an agency of the national government. Since the early 1940s the state wanted to have a greater authority in the provinces and the evidence shows that rural communities took advantage of this effort for their own interests. Finally, another issue is that of disagreements over pedagogical practices. Rural parents could have their own ideas about how their children should be educated; these ideas could diverge from those upheld by SECPANE officers.

In 1951, when SECPANE initially approached Ccorao to propose the establishment of the núcleo escolar, the villagers refused to collaborate. A SECPANE officer argued later that there was a rumor in the village that the program was trying to usurp the peasants' land or even take away their children. SECPANE invited local children to attend a summer school in the city of Cuzco in early 1953 to persuade parents to change their attitude. According to the SECPANE officer, the peasants whose children attended the summer school became supportive of the program once they saw first-hand the changes in appearance and personality that their children had experienced in the summer school:

The effect was magical. The Indians saw their children as if they were the offspring of gentlemen. They had been carefully tidied up, given haircuts and taught how to use a comb. They had been reasonably fed and, perhaps for the first time in their life, they had gone through those pastimes that we civilized people consider indispensable to shape the soul of our children. The Indian child of severe and distrustful expression, of face reluctant to smile, had been transformed in the summer school of Cuzco. He laughed, smiled, played, and was communicative and talkative. The teachers who participated of this test experience the most appropriate methods to educate indigenous children, and treated them with an affection that these were not used to receive from the white man.⁴¹

The testimony of the SECPANE officer betrayed his ethnocentrism but also provided an insight into the motives that Ccorao parents had to support the program. The functionary assumed that – without formal education -- Indian children were naturally and permanently somber. He also presumed that they did not play at all because their pastimes were different from those of non-Indian children. However, the program officer also perceived that peasants valued the fact that their offspring looked that the children of people from higher social status – like children of *caballeros* or gentlemen. For peasants, formal education improved the status of their

⁴¹ UNITED STATES INFORMATION SERVICE. *Ccorao: la comunidad rebelde*. Lima: United States Information Service. 1956, 3.

children and by extension their own.

As an agency of the national government, SECPANE had not only educational prerogatives but also political leverage. SECPANE officers could influence the decisions of national and local administrative authorities. Peasants could resort to SECPANE to escape the exactions of local landlords. For instance, during the construction of the new school building in Ccorao, an unidentified man from a nearby village demanded that the village provide workers to exploit a mine he owned. This man was most probably a local gamonal who wanted the villagers of Ccorao to provide servile labor. The villagers, who were giving their labor to build up the new school, asked SECPANE for help. Accompanied by SECPANE's local chief and the coordinator of *núcleos escolares* in Cuzco community leaders complained to the regional prefect. The political officer ensured the community leaders that they did not have to provide labor to the mine owner. Later on the miner approached SECPANE and offered to provide gypsum for the new school building in exchange for the community's labor – SECPANE rejected this arrangement.⁴²

Printed official documents do not elaborate on disagreements between SECPANE and rural communities over educational arrangements or practices. Nevertheless, it is possible to detect some potential instances of conflict between officers and parents. For instance, when SECPANE officers accepted to establish a school in Ccorao they asked the villagers to provide a school building. The parents of Ccorao built a new building according to their own knowledge but SECPANE found it inadequate so the villagers had to discard it. Then, they proceeded to build a new school following the guidelines of SECPANE – we can safely speculate that the peasants of Ccorao were not pleased about having to build a new school twice.⁴³ Another potential source of conflict was the ethnocentric view that some SECPANE officers had about the indigenous population. Antonio Pinilla quoted a document related to the *núcleo* of Caritamaya, south of Lake Titicaca, which described the arrival of students to the school in the following terms:

"The younger children run toward the gym like agile *vicuñas*. They are mesmerized by the swing and the seesaw. But they have learned to respect order and [to wait for] their turn and thus they make use of these pastimes in total harmony."⁴⁴

The officer quoted by Pinilla compared indigenous children to *vicuñas*, the camelid native to the South American Andes. According to the quote, schooling provided these children with civilized qualities like order and harmony. Similar dismissive expressions or attitudes by SECPANE officers may have caused conflicts during the years of operation of the *núcleos escolares*.

5. Conclusions

The social, economic, and political changes that were happening in the rural areas of Peru in the early 1940s motivated the national government to organize

⁴² BRAVO RATTO, César. Ccorao. Un ensayo de educación fundamental. *América Indígena*, 1955, XV, 2, 123.

⁴³ BRAVO RATTO, César. Ccorao. Un ensayo de educación fundamental. *América Indígena*, 1955, XV, 2, 121-123.

⁴⁴ PINILLA, Antonio. Los Núcleos Escolares Rurales en el Perú. *América Indígena*, 1952, 233.

SECPANE and the núcleos escolares campesinos in collaboration with the US government. North American interest, in turn, was initially linked to the Good Neighbor Policy and later on to the Cold War. While trying to prevent the expansion of Nazism and Communism in Latin America, US authorities also wanted to promote the economic development of the region in order to foster political stability and guarantee the provision of raw materials and the growth of potential markets. According to the available documents, the opinion of the indigenous communities themselves was not taken into consideration in the organization of núcleos escolares. As historian Thomas Davies noted in 1974, during the first half of the twentieth century Indigenista policies consistently failed to gather Indian input.⁴⁵

Part of the motivation of the Peruvian state to create the núcleos escolares was to address the social and economic changes that were happening in the countryside. The growing commercialization of the rural economy caused increasing conflicts between gamonales and peasants and contributed to outmigration. Rural conflicts were partially caused by the gamonales' efforts to proletarianize indigenous peasants by taking away their traditional land rights. The state had an ambivalent attitude toward these conflicts; on the one hand, the national government provided some protection to communal lands, but on the other hand it meddled into internal communal affairs and emphasized the role of Indians as rural workers. There was also ambiguity in the way in which Indigenistas conceptualized Indians: they wanted to make them peasants through education but at the same time continued using the term "Indians" to refer to them.

The Indigenista policy that the Peruvian state adopted since the Leguía administration provided peasant communities with official recognition and some degree of protection for their landholdings. However, it also granted the state a greater measure of political and economic control over communities. In Bolivia, according to Brooke Larson, the state project of rural education tried to subordinate the hogar campesino to a normative hegemonic order that comprised the interests of national development, social order, and patriarchal power.⁴⁶ In Peru there was a similar process: the creation of the núcleos escolares and the role of social leaders assigned to rural teachers increased state intervention in peasant communities and families.

One aspect that requires further exploration is that of the responses of local communities to SECPANE and the núcleos escolares. In this paper, I have referred to the divergence between an educational project that saw the indigenous population mainly as rural labor, and the communities themselves, which seemed to value the potential of education as a means to social mobility. Local communities also resorted to SECPANE officers in order to advance their interests in their interactions with gamonales. In the case of Bolivia during the 1930s, Brooke Larson and Laura Gotkowitz have found that rural schools became sites of indigenous struggle for communal land restoration and peasant syndicalism.⁴⁷ It is possible that a similar

⁴⁵ DAVIES JR, Thomas M. *Indian Integration in Peru. A Half Century of Experience, 1900-1948*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1974, 161.

⁴⁶ LARSON, Brooke. Capturing Indian Bodies, Hearths, and Minds. The Gendered Politics of Rural School Reform in Bolivia, 1920s-1940s. En: ANDREW CANESSA (ed). *Natives Making Nation: Gender, Indigeneity, and the State in the Andes*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2005, 34-35.

⁴⁷ LARSON, Brooke. Capturing Indian Bodies, Hearths, and Minds. The Gendered Politics of Rural

phenomenon may have occurred in the case of Peru.

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IV, no. 1, p. 73-77.