

Fondo documental diocesano “Monseñor Leonidas Proaño”: a fundamental source for the history of Chimborazo in Ecuador during the second half of the 20th Century

Abstract

In 1990, the diocesan documentary fund “Monseñor Leonidas Proaño” was opened to preserve the diocesan historical archive in the Diocese of Riobamba. Taita Proaño, as indigenous people know him, is known for advocating indigenous rights in Ecuador and Latin America. The purpose of this article is to show the public the existence and importance of this fund, as well as some of the topics that we can find in this library of documentaries that can be useful to those interested in understanding and reconstructing history. Chimborazo, Ecuador, and Latin America in the second half of the 20th century.

Keywords: archive, historical source, indigenous people, liberation theology, agrarian reform, history

Introduction

In 1992, the Diocesan documentary collection “Monseñor Leonidas Proaño” was inaugurated with Central Bank of Ecuador funding. The monumental project that began in 1991 included the cleaning, reorganization, and cataloging of the diocesan historical Archives, various documents of bishop Leonidas Proaño (1910-1988), the old diocesan Clergy Library, papers and books of the old Minor Seminary La Dolorosa. The distant promoter of the Collection was Bishop Proaño, therefore, motivated by the impact of a known similar Diocesan Historical Archives of Monsignor Samuel Ruiz García in the Diocese of San Cristóbal de las Casas in Chiapas (Mexico).

The task was three-phased and with several collaborators involved. Some names of those involved include Homero García, Estuardo Gallegos Espinoza, Pedro Navas, Rocio Pazmiño, Jose Sosa Rojas, Viviana Velasco, Alonso Bustos, Julio García, Mercedes Pozo de Rodríguez, Eliza Velata, Anita Moyota, Agustín Bravo, and Guillermo Bustos, among others. It should be noted that this ecclesiastical archive in the province of Chimborazo (Ecuador) has historical significance with an essential collaboration of people who were summoned to collaborate with documentation, photographs, and valuable books.

Phase one began towards the end of 1990; the Central Bank of Ecuador allocated resources to rescue documentary heritage in the Diocese of Riobamba. This also included the restoration of the diocesan documents and the creation of a library. The books and records that had to be ordered were kept in a cellar of the old building of the Diocese.

Phase two: in 1991, the private archive of Bishop Leonidas Proaño was rescued from his study room and bedroom, which had been left in disarray after a “no-consented” trip of the files and books from Riobamba to San Antonio de Ibarra (Proaño birthplace) and from here again to the Diocesan Curia of Riobamba. It’s noteworthy that both ecclesiastical and civil regulations protect this last step.¹⁻⁵

Finally, phase three: in 1992, documents in the custody of the Minor Seminary and other institutions were recovered, and they became part of the Library and Documentary Collection. That same year, an institutional agreement was signed between the Church and

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the Polytechnic of Chimborazo. Under this, technical assistance was received to establish a primary classification index for the Library and the Documentary Collection.¹

According to Estuardo Gallegos, the cleaning of material and organization was then carried out as follows: Diocesan Archive itself, which contains documents from 1648 to 1853, and the Fondo Documental “Monseñor Leonidas Proaño,” which incorporates documents from his administration and thought as Bishop of Riobamba, from 1954 to 1986.²

Fondo Documental “Monseñor Leonidas Proaño” in the Diocese of Riobamba houses the work of most tremendous historical significance of Bishop Proaño between 1954 and 1985.³ The fund is quantified in fifteen square meters (326 boxes, 2444 textual documents, and twenty cassettes).

The thirty-one-year episcopate linked the most pressing social, political, and religious issues related to the indigenous population and the popular sectors in the province of Chimborazo with a humanist approach through a pastoral and theological practice based on the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church, the declarations and decrees of the Second Vatican Council, and liberation theology.

Since the creation of the Diocese of Bolívar (Currently Riobamba) on the 29 of Diciembre of 1862, with the promulgation of the Pontifical Bull “Maiori Animarum,” (watermark document), there has always been an archive. That is, filing essential documents like letters (internal and external communication between the Diocesan Bishop and his priests and vice versa; between the Diocese and other personalities and institutions), official protocol visits records, financial reports, minutes of episcopal meetings, episcopal logs, and pastoral visits. It can be concluded that selective storage and conservation of information and documents is a fundamental institutional and administrative acción.

¹San Pedro de Riobamba Diocese and Instituto de Estudios Avanzados (IDEA). Documental Fondo Guide “Monseñor Leonidas Proaño”. 2008.

²Testimony of Estuardo Gallegos to the investigator. 2023.

³Leonidas Eduardo Proaño Villaba was born on January 29, 1910, in San Antonio de Ibarra, province of Imbabura in northern Ecuador, and died in Armenia Quito on August 31, 1988. He was appointed bishop of the Diocese of Bolívar in 1954, a ministry he held until 1985.

Besides, the Church is responsible for the integral and harmonious conservation of records like baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and deaths.⁴ In this perspective and considering the significance of standard document management, the diocesan Documentary Fund, Archives, and Library are valuable sources for investigating the past, the province of Chimborazo, in this case.

This investigation aims to expose the public existence of the Fondo Documental "Monseñor Leonidas Proaño" (FDDMLP) and attempt to describe it. At the same time, it discusses the importance of the reservoir and the treatment of the cultural heritage of localities and regions. Two axes have been identified to guide the study: recovering local documentary heritage and promoting documentary repositories, libraries, and documentary centers as social and historical memory spaces.

In a limited way, the archive uses Document Management Systems (DGS), a technical tool to organize documents and a fundamental means of exercising the mission of all organizations; therefore, it is considered the cornerstone for fulfilling the purpose of documentary collection administration.⁵

The hypothesis is that it can be challenging to disentangle the province's history from the archives. Therefore, there is unity, and they engage with one another constantly, especially from a social perspective. Thinking of the role of religion in society and its influence on public life, one cannot deny its relationship with the conservation of historical documents.

In this case, this research project focuses on the management of documentary in the context of the diocesan archives of Riobamba. Therefore, it is necessary the description of the investigation problem within the framework of the organization of the repository, as well as the challenges it faces. The central question is, how is the FDDMLP a fundamental source of local history (Chimborazo), especially the second half of the 20th Century?

The impact of the entity FDDMLP is understood within the framework of documentary management. This archival practice was developed and designed with time, introducing the life cycle of unknown documents, and showing an interrelation between the various stages that apply to personal or institutional archives. The Church's historical archive of Riobamba city enjoys a great tradition, given that it has been part of its development, contributing to the growth and formation of the province and the country.⁷⁻¹⁰

The institutional commitment to the historical archives of the Diocese is vital in establishing historical memory and structure strengthening, where the local identity is conserved and reinforced. In addition, it must be specified as a commitment, economic investment to safeguard and preserve documents and information. Restoration and maintenance of documentary archives, technical works, etc., are linked to the learning and transformation of society and all human disciplines.

The research techniques are defined in the analysis and observation matrix context. The method selected involved two phases: empirical and data analysis and interpretation of results. In the first stage, I had to visit the archive, interview personnel, and familiarize myself with the environment; simultaneously, I collected data and prepared the information for analysis.

⁴Books of Baptisms 1600 to 1931; Marriage Books 1599 to 1902; Books of Defuncts 1720 to 1960.

⁵Agustí Cerrillo, Anahí Casadesús de Mingo. The impact of document management on the transparency of public administrations: transparency by design. 2018.

The article is composed of an introduction, results, and discussion. In the analysis and discussion of results, the idea is to highlight and diagnose the archive, its management, and administration. Finally, the debate also highlights the document management and administration of files within strategic planning and the need for organizational culture and preservation.

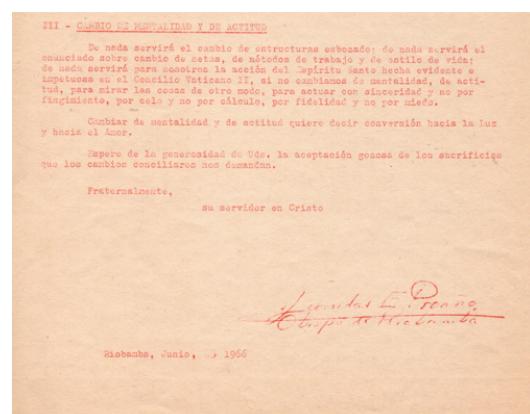
Results

As we have already announced, FDDMLP is a religious entity that offers public service and is always free. Fortunately, the benefits linked to the local history investigation and general reading began in late 1990, when the pioneers began to work on the organization and cataloging of available material like books, letters, photos, etc.

Regarding accessibility, the Diocese has a library area and archives, "Fondo Documental Monseñor Leonidas Proaño." It has a full-time librarian who attends to users from 08h30 to 13h00 and from 15h00 to 18h30, Monday to Friday. Access to the documents in the library and the documentary collection is public, though, in some instances, it is required to submit a request addressed to the bishop. The documentation therein is not digitized. Therefore, reviewing and extracting information is manual (Figure 1). The library and the archives have a list of books, documents, photos, and cassettes (video and tape) in an excel file. With this, it's possible to find the contents. Currently, there are no intentions or resources to digitize the Archive. The documents therein are originals: that is to say, the documentary fund is authentic (Figure 2).



Figure 1 Anita Moyota, librarian, and caretaker of FDDMLP, with Pedro Navas, a technical collaborator in the Archives, revising documents. Shot by Eliza Velata, diciembre 2022.



The Archive has seven shelves: there is a shelf that contains the cataloged documents in the Winiss database; these are filed in 50 boxes and have 7.6 linear meters; the other shelf includes the administrative records of Bishop Proaño, these are 140 folders. The remaining five shelves are classified materials with topics like diocesan evaluations and indigenous pastoral work. These are 273 filing boxes that correspond to 47 linear meters.¹¹⁻¹³

It is worth noting that the thought and work of bishop Proaño favored indigenous communities and against oppression. Therefore, his apostolate recognized the human quality of indigenous peoples and the poor, thus transcending borders, and has impregnated in the memory of all Ecuadorians the sense of respect, and solidarity with the needy, echoing their doctrine dedicated to the noble cause of human rights, which seeks the social and political equality of all the races, ethnicities, and cultures of the nation.⁶

The Ministry of Culture, on August 29, 2008, declared the thought and works of Proaño as an intangible cultural heritage of the Ecuadorian State. This is made for the cultural legacy that the pastor of the poor left for all generations of the country and the world at large, having adopted as a personal way of life a determined and permanent action of historical vindication of the rights of the indigenous people.

Also, the Plenary of the Constituent Assembly on August 14, 2008, declared the Proaño “Obispo de los Indios” (bishop of the indigenous) as a national symbol and model to the future generations in the struggle for integral liberation: against oppression, exclusion, and marginalization in Ecuador. The National Assembly valued the work of seeking freedom and social justice as a condition *sine qua non* of peace.⁷

Part of the history of the diocesan archives represents the concentration of testimonies of the day-to-day actions of the bishops, especially of bishop Leonidas Proaño, and of other religious actors that marked the life of the local church and, to some extent, the Ecuadorian. There is also information on the financial and pastoral administration of the diocese (Figures 3–5).

Several subjects are treated in the administrative files. The themes are administration,⁸ apostolate,⁹ catechesis,¹⁰ development,¹¹ ecumenism,¹² education,¹³ evangelization,¹⁴ formation of priests,¹⁵

⁶L Proaño. Like yourself. Dialogues on Human Rights, lunalibre collection. 2008.

⁷Official Record, Quito. Year II, no. 403, Thursday, August 14, 2008.

⁸File no. 1 contains administration-related issues: property administration (parishes, lands, farms, appointments of priests, commissions, tribunals, certificated and recommendations, social security fund contributions).

⁹Apostolate file contains issues like the doctrine of the Catholic church and organization of various diocesan activities like meetings, meals, dinner, etc.

¹⁰Catechesis: the file contains issues linked to the catechetical organization, communication, reports of various activities, and catechetical and didactical materials.

¹¹Development: This contains issues related to the development projects in the Diocese: Literacy programs for adults (alphabetization)- The radio Escuela Radiofónicas Populares del Ecuador (ERPE), Corporativism (Cooperativa Juan Diego), syndicalism, planification, social organization: CARITAS, charity institutions, and other development programs and activities.

¹²Ecumenism: deals with information on church doctrine on ecumenism, relations with other faiths, and activities.

¹³Education. This file contains issues related to the church's teaching on education and learning institutions (Primary and secondary).

¹⁴Evangelization: this deals with missions, workshops, spiritual retreats, Christian assemblies, novenas, Bible A.B.C, Small Christian Communities, and brotherhoods.

¹⁵Formation of priests: this has issues related to the seminary, Courses, and bursaries.

homilies,¹⁶ liturgy,¹⁷ Collective pastoral (Pastoral de Conjunto),¹⁸ Council of priests,¹⁹ relations,²⁰ religious,²¹ and vacations.²²



Figure 3 Ring binders with administrative information in the FDMLP (Shot by Anita Moyota).



Figure 4 Ring binders with administrative information in the FDMLP (Shot by Anita Moyota).

¹⁶Homilies include dispositions and preachings/sharing.

¹⁷Liturgy in this file, one can get liturgical celebrations: guides and materials, feasts, temples, images, sacred art, and Eucharistic Congress.

¹⁸The file that corresponded to “Pastoral de conjunto” (Collective pastoral) contains issues like institutes related to the diocesan pastoral, diocesan departments, national commissions, courses, mission congresses, and ministries.

¹⁹Council of priests contains the organization of the clergy, meeting minutes, priests' reports, and spirituality.

²⁰Relations. This refers to communication to and from the Diocese. The file contains letters from international organizations, national government, and local organizations; letters from authorities (international, national, and local): communication about congresses and meetings.

²¹Religious. Here one can find the names of the religious congregations working in the Diocese and the communication between them and the bishop. There are papers with a list of individual religious communities' activities—also, general information about the activities of consecrated life.

²²Vacations file offers an overview of the studies, campaigns, and reports about the bishop, priests, religious and the lay people.



Figure 5 Ring binders with administrative information in the FDMLP (Shot by Anita Moyota).

The key for the abovementioned is the issues numbered I and II. The numbering "I" is strictly Administration, and "II" corresponds to Apostolate. The divisions: it's in alphabetic order, be it persons or institutions. For example, in "I" the letter G identifies Governmental (Gubernativo).

For the subdivisions, it follows the arabica numbering, slash, and with the last two figures of the year. E.g., in "I" the letter and the year. In this way, I-C-1-67; I-C-2-67; I-C-3-67, etc.

The files contain issues that correspond to the calendar from January - December. If the year has more information, the documents are divided, and at the end of the numeration, the letters "a" and "b" are added. E.g., I-C-1-67/a; I-C-2-67/b.

Some documents have the same contents or have more than one theme. The classification is, therefore, determined using the principal aspect identified and put in the matching file subject. In this perspective, some documents that contain esoteric subjects are arranged in secondary files with a note to indicate the novelty.

The file "Development" contains information about human promotion programs: bursaries to students in secondary and university. The names of the students and their families are essential in investigating the families' income levels and how the beneficiary changed the environment. Studying the popular housing program in Riobamba town is also possible: one can trace the names of individuals who formed the housing cooperatives and the process followed to build houses for the poor and homeless. Through the file, it is possible to study the criteria used to identify the sectors demarcated as settlements.

The gallery of the bishops of the Diocese is another point that can offer important information on the province's history (See table 1 bishops of Riobamba). These are considered to have contributed uniquely to the growth of the urban and rural sectors. For example, parishes, chapels, and schools (nursery and primary) were created in the Riobamba and outside. This information is relevant when it comes to the study of educational development history.

Table I Bishops of the Diócesis of Riobamba from 29 December 1862 to 2022

Bishop	Tenure	Brief history
Alberto María Ordoñez Crespo	1913-1954	Alberto was born in Cuenca on November 2, 1872 and died after a long illness in 1954.
Leonidas Eduardo Proaño Villalba	1954- 1985	Proaño was born in Ibarra on January 29, 1910. He was consecrated bishop for the see of Bolívar in Ibarra on May 26, 1954. He took possession of the See of Bolívar on May 29, 1954. Resigned as the bishop on 29 January 1985. He died in Quito, Armenia, on August 31, 1988.
Víctor Corral Mantilla	1985 - 2011	He was born in Guayaquil on February 17, 1936. He was consecrated auxiliary bishop of Riobamba on February 14, 1982. He worked with L. Proaño for three years. In 1985 he was appointed Apostolic Administrator of Riobamba. After two years, he was appointed bishop of Riobamba. He resigned from his pastoral position in the Diocese of Riobamba in 2011. He currently resides in Quito.
Julio Parrilla Díaz	2013- 2021	He was born in Orense in Spain, on March 25, 1946. When young, he discovered his religious vocation and entered the Pious Society of St. Francis de Sales ("better known as the Salesians, S.D.B."). Over the years, on 18 April 2008, he was appointed by His Holiness on Pope Benedict XVI as Bishop of the Diocese of Loja. On January 12, 2013, he was appointed by Benedict XVI as the new Bishop of the Diocese of Riobamba. He officially took possession of this diocese on May 2 of the same year.
José Bolívar Piedra Aguirre	2021 Current	Monsignor José Bolívar Piedra was born in Nabón (Province of Azuay) on November 25, 1965, he was ordained a priest in 1990.

Creating and strengthening Small Christian Communities (SCC) is a theme that can be studied to learn about the transformation of religious movements in Riobamba town. It is also a possibility to explore the ecumenical movement in the province, its strengths and weaknesses (Table 1).²³

Diocese archives and library explicitly demonstrate how materials intersect with historical archives, filmotecas, fototecas, museums, and private collections. The archive comprises documents of multiple formats (textual, sound, visual, audiovisual, etc.)

Since its creation in the late nineteenth century, the Diocese did not have an explicit and systematic collection or preservation of material in archives. However, the priests in the parishes had their collection practices, archival methodologies, and criteria for analyzing the

²³Caja Ecumenismo.

materials in their possession. It is popularly held that the local clergy destroyed documents considered “illicit” and “obscene.” In this perspective, materials related to baptism, marriages, deaths, and homilies formed the bulk. On the other hand, the missionary priests habitually kept daily notebooks where they recorded all the activities of the day and the books of the sacraments.

The Archive contains the material produced by bishop Proaño. It can be divided into four levels:

- Personal notes: notebooks, correspondence, travel diary, interviews, text notes, short notes of meetings (extra-diocesan and diocesan), drawings, and poems.
- Pastoral teachings: Pastoral address, Orders of pastoral visits, notes for conferences, book drafts, conferences, outlines, homilies, pastoral reports, and manifestations or protests. In this category, we can also consider his spirituality: personal meditations, reflections, and spiritual talks.
- Diocesan communiqués: Pastoral letters, circulars, decrees, exhortations, edicts, and messages related to special moments like birthdays, deaths, Lent, Christmas, and New year. Lastly, bibliographic materials: Published books,²⁴ periodical articles, serial publications, documents from various events, monographs, and thesis and reports (Figures 6 & 7).²⁵



Figure 6 Fondo Documental Diocesano “Monseñor Leonidas Proaño” in Curia of Riobamba (Shots by the author, August 2022).

²⁴Some of the works are: Coordinación de Pastoral Diocesana, Encuentro de Riobamba, (Riobamba: Iglesia de Riobamba, 1998); Agustín Bravo Muñoz, El soñador se fue pero su sueño tarde, (Quito: Fondo Documental Diocesano, 1998); Enrique Ayala Mora, Leonidas Proaño: The Political Option of a Prophet, (Quito: La Tierra, 1998); Nelly Arrobo Rodas, comp., Quedan los arboles que sembraste: testimonios sobre Monseñor Leonidas Proaño (Quito: Fundación Pueblo Indio del Ecuador, La Tierra, 2008); Díaz P., Rubén, Mons. Leonidas Proaño: hacia una iglesia liberadora, (Quito, EC: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador, Departamento de Cultura e Investigación Religiosa, s.f.)

²⁵Leonidas Proaño. *I believe in men and in the community, Autobiography*, (Quito: Corporación Editora Nacional, 2001); L. Proaño, *Liberating Education*, (Quito: Corporación Editora Nacional/Fundación Pueblo Indio, 2013); L. Proaño, *Conscientization, evangelization and politics*, (Riobamba: Edicentro, 1992).



Figure 7 Fondo Documental Diocesano “Monseñor Leonidas Proaño” in Curia of Riobamba (Shots by the author, August 2022).

The pastoral visits that constituted the pilgrimage for the Diocese, a historical vision and prophetic ministry of bishop Proaño, have been registered in his dairies.²⁶ These have remarks and some central ideas of the meeting with the clergy and the common folk. In some cases, he also describes the places: the landscape, the people, and the lifestyle. His descriptions make it possible to imagine the site and the people.

This time, the day was cloudy and windy. We left the vehicle in front of a house, ascended the necessary mountain stretch, and began to descend towards the depths of a ravine when it grows in winter... Then again, up and up. We went to those places that were sinking gently but permanently. The grounds look magnificent. The plantations are tall and robust. The height of the broad bean and *quinua* plants is striking. ... the rain began to fall, and we arrived at the house of the president of the community. They welcomed us with great joy. They brought a bench out into the corridor from inside the house, spread their *poncho* on it, and invited us to sit. From there, we listened to the notes of a music band and asked what it was about.²⁷

The bishop also noted some telephone numbers and names of people he had encountered for the first time. It was also the record of his pastoral and social concerns.²⁸ Some agendas contain the calendar of meetings inside and outside the Diocese.²⁹ Museum tours reference objectivists to the contemporary life of indigenous people approach.

Some suggestive topics

Liberation theology (LT)

We can find several writings about liberation theology from Bishop Proaño and texts by other priests from other countries, especially in South America. In particular, the documents stand out the ovation of the Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutiérrez, one of the foremost exponents of Liberation theology (1968).

With his contribution to LT, Proaño showed that poverty, social exclusion, and exploitation were not accidental but the product of unfavorable social, economic, and political structures towards the

²⁶Leonidas Proaño. Agenda 1964 – 1965. A.1.AG1, Box 1. The material is in print form and manuscript, 96 Pages.

²⁷L. Proaño. “Indigenous Communities”, Radial Program. 1973.

²⁸L Proaño. Agenda 1981-1982, A.1.AG5, Box 1. The material is paper, in print and manuscript, 96 Pages.

²⁹L Proaño. meeting calendar, 0007, A.1.AG6, Box 1, 18 pages.

poor, workers, peasants, and indigenous people. In this sense, it is understood that the new stage had dawned with social, cultural, and religious changes, with a need for a counter-hegemonic thought to transform society and reflect on faith.

Rethink the role of the Church in his Diocese, considering the challenges after the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the Second Latin-Americans Bishops Conference of Medellin (1968), and the emergence of LT, Proaño asked if it was possible to be Christians in an oppressed continent. It is, therefore, considered that, under the influence of the conciliar renewal, the diocesan Church handed over lands of its property to the indigenous huasipungueros (Caretakers) and, at the same time, created the Granja Escuela de Tepeyac (1963). In the following years, the bishop advanced several changes that provoked criticisms from his detractors, including the clergy. In general, the changes can be classified as ecclesial and pastoral.³⁰

The new structures inaugurated include Casa Hogar Santa Cruz, which would be dedicated to forming the religious and lay men and women. Then afterward followed the Small Christian Communities, Cooperatives for popular housing (Cooperativas de Vivienda Popular), popular missions in the rural parishes motivated by Equipo Misionero Itinerante (EMI founded in 1970), pastoral sectors that enhanced collaboration and group work among the priests and religious.

According to Daniel Levine: Theologians and activists identified with this body of thinking... the necessity and primacy of action to promote justice, and look to everyday experience - above all, the experience of the poor – as a source of religiously valid values.³¹

As an activist-pastor, he focused on agendas related to poverty, violence, lack of housing, and poor land distribution. From this, he shaped his almost ten years (between 1971 to 1980) of discourse on radio "Hoy y Mañana."³²

It is therefore understood that the bishop confronted the tension between liturgy (rites and solemn ceremonies) and social justice. It is also affirmed that his concerns for social justice, inequality, and peace were not only interested in analyzing the situation of the poor and the oppressed in the province and the continent. Therefore, his actions are recognized within the liberation theology trend based on his life and spirituality. Proaño and his collaborators took upon themselves the task of contributing with reflection and liberation actions to transform the lives of the vulnerable in the Diocese, primarily the indigenous. In this way, significant progress was made, whereby the indie part of the revolutionary events in Latin America and the world.

Proaño's contributions to liberation theology are as follows: Liberation theology is born of action and motivates new action; Its budget is to approach every human being: oppressed, excluded, marginalized, and abandoned. Compassion is not a vague feeling; it is a profoundly interior attitude which allows one to become neighbors (Figure 8).

³⁰Maurice Awiti. "Pastoral and ecclesiological contributions by Leonidas Proaño in the Diocese of Riobamba: Recepción del Vaticano II, 1964-1984". *Revista Imaginario Social*. 2021;4(2):181–204.

³¹Daniel Levine. *Politics, Religion and Society in Latin America*, London: Lynne Rienner; 2012.

³²Here are some of the topics: "In Penipe. Apropos de la terminación de las misiones; Ecuador is open to changes; Christian reflection on the news and educational process of the people: Closure of catechism courses in Quito; The realization of a course of nine weeks in Santa Cruz, of the pie to deal with a community experience that can be complicated, taking as experience is first; About the dignity of the human person, narration of a training boy in values; News of torture and ill-treatment in Central America.



Figure 8 Bishop Proaño during a press conference. Source Fondo Documental Diocesano "Monseñor Leonidas Proaño".

Agrarian reforms

The centrality of the poor, primarily the indigenous, explains much about the land problem in Chimborazo and Ecuador. Proaño gave importance to land, considering it a fundamental means of liberation. Given that the indigenous were landless and exploited in the haciendas, the land was a cause of social and political conflict.

We can find information regarding various agrarian conflicts in the province between 1948 and 1985. In this regard, we can mention the disputes between the community members of Toctezinín in the Chunchi Canton (1974): the peasants were attacked, beaten, and mistreated by the police while harvesting on a Magna hacienda. During the conflict, Lázaro Condo was assassinated.

Within this framework, land as the axis of social inequality in Chimborazo was the place of the reproduction of hegemony through a complex relationship of pacts that guaranteed loyalties back and forth.³³

From 1964 to 1984 -the pastoral period of Bishop Proaño-a total of 108,368.18 hectares were awarded to the indigenous organizations of Chimborazo, without counting the haciendas of Zula and Monjas Corral (just over 31,000 hectares). The said haciendas were the property of the Diocese, which was eventually given to the indigenous peasants as part of the land reforms program initiated by the bishop. The idea was to establish a new order, with the indigenous as landowners. Subsequently, the Church could not be neutral regarding social injustices and abuses: it had to get involved in organizing, mobilizing, and conscientizing, at the same time, searching for allies and legitimacy.

Debate and conclusions

Although the Chimborazo context has unique characteristics, it cannot be considered in isolation from Ecuador and Latin America in analyzing its scientific output and the opportunities that interregional and interdisciplinary approaches to understanding it (Figure 9).

Document management in the field of public administration in the Diocese needs to be formalized not only through the creation of the General Diocesan Archive. Therefore, promoting, organizing, and

³³Ailynn Torres Santana. "Citizenship, State and land ownership regimes in Ecuador, 1960-1979". (FLACSO-Quito, 2017, Thesis to obtain a PhD in History from University Los Andes).

strengthening religious archives is crucial to ensure the effectiveness of Church management and heritage conservation documentaries. At the same time, with norms, enhancing the importance of archival function and efficient document management within the church in general, particularly in the parishes, is possible. The Canon Law 491 Art. 2 and 3 stipulates that each Diocese must have a Historical Archive for documents of exceptional value, administrative records, and juridical instruments that refer to and bear witness to pastoral life and care. The diocesan Bishop should regulate and ensure the excellent use of the entity.

Figure 9 Extract of Guía del Fondo Documental Diocesano “Monseñor Leonidas Proaño”.

The direct observation of shortcomings and tensions in the processes concerning Document Management directly impacts the procedures and services of the entity, the bishop, and the property council need to consolidate an environment of efficiency, including ICTs, in the processes of documentary conservation and access.

According to the above, the following question arises: What is the current situation of Document Management in the context of religious and public administration in the Diocese and its incidence institutional performance? Below are photographs that manifest an urgent need for a better management system (Figures 10).



Figure 10 Photos of the documentary, photographic, audiovisual collections, furniture, and floors seriously affected by the flood due to a fault in the water pipes of the Diocesan Curia building.

It is considered that the Diocese has an obligation and responsibility to manage the documentation and information generated by the bishops in the exercise of their functions and the priests, religious, and lay people; this is a moral and social responsibility and obligation to

safeguard, duly classified and arranged chronologically and indexed all documents, data, and information.

The documents are unique and unrepeatable; therefore, they accurately record events, a profound reflection on the reality and repertoire of the memory of Bishop Proaño and other historical actores.

The notion of documentary management is an essential support to investigators of Chimborazo, especially historians. Through the concept, one can broaden research horizons and advocate for various interrelations and perspectives within an inter-relational dialogue. There are many challenges in the province ranging from social, cultural, religious, economic, and historical, these require academics and researchers to observe and listen, but significantly to rethink and revise constantly the methods of investigation.

This investigation is the interim conclusion of what has been a long journey. The core argument is that the Documentary Collection has been and continues to open new horizons with and contributes to a broad understanding of the Ecuadorian Church, society, and culture.

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Conflicts of interest

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