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POLITICS IN THE ALTERNATIVE MEDIA OF LIMA

LA POLÍTICA EN LOS MEDIOS DE COMUNICACIÓN ALTERNATIVOS DE LIMA

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KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT

Traditional media have been predominant and have had a greater influence on the public. However, in recent years, various alternative media have been created that have a greater acceptance. A content analysis of these media that disseminate political information has been carried out. The following media have been considered: Servendi, Lamula, Wayka, IDL-Reporteros, etc. The results show that they disseminate objective, reliable information based on the categories: actions of authorities, protests, human rights, electoral aspects, environmental problems, aspirations of indigenous communities, etc. It is concluded that these media are accepted for the information on political problems that they disseminate.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Medios de comunicación
Medios alternativos
Información objetiva
Derechos humanos
Información falsa
Problemas ambientales
Protestas

RESUMEN

Los medios de comunicación tradicionales han tenido predominio y mayor influencia en el público. Sin embargo, en los últimos años, se han creado diversos medios alternativos que tienen mayor acogida. Se ha realizado un análisis de contenido de estos medios que difunden información política. Se han considerado los medios: Servendi, Lamula, Wayka, IDL-Reporteros, etc. Los resultados evidencian que difunden información objetiva, confiable con base en las categorías: actuación de autoridades, protestas, derechos humanos, aspectos electorales, problemas ambientales, aspiración de las comunidades indígenas, etc. Se concluye que estos medios tienen acogida por las informaciones sobre problemas políticos que difunden.

1. Introduction

Since the 1970s, alternative media have emerged as an option to the major media outlets and conglomerates that do not respond to the interests of citizens, that act on the basis of political, corporate or economic interests and that monopolize information (Fernández, 2023; Gutiérrez et al., 2023; Cruz-Castillo et al., 2023). These media arose to give the public back truthful information, a fundamental right to which people should have access without any restriction. Within this framework, such media become the main sources of information for citizens, who take on a more active role (Gutiérrez et al., 2023).

The manipulation or management of information through the use of ICTs and digital platforms has generated distrust among listeners and audiences toward traditional and hegemonic news media (Gutiérrez et al., 2023). Academic debates have thus emerged on alternative media operating through the internet and social networks (Tréguer et al., 2020). Traditional media, however, have also been updating or adapting to the digital system (Solórzano et al., 2024).

Other groups, such as activists, do not trust traditional media and have instead created their own media through social networks; they disseminate information and news online and have used the internet as a public space to share data and keep informed (Harlow & Harp, 2013). At the same time, economic conglomerates have emerged that promote media companies. This is evident in Latin America and also in Peru, where 80% of the media market is concentrated in *El Comercio* (Cornejo, 2022).

Alternative media express or disseminate experiences that constitute genuine options to traditional media. They establish themselves as an alternative to hegemonic or predominant policies and information (Fleischman et al., 2009). In their development, they are linked to communities that have consolidated with the rise of technology, and they are disseminated through websites, forums, blogs and podcasts that generate social interactions aimed at strengthening reflection and social awareness, which is useful in today's global context. In this way, they enable greater social participation through a variety of documents, images, videos and audio recordings (Corrales & Hernández, 2009).

Alternative media are born of people's own interests—their daily activities and the change or transformation they seek to bring about. They communicate what is happening in society. Since their emergence (in the 1960s), they have sought to bring about ideological, social or political change in the global context, which is why they have generated new ways of communicating to achieve greater participation (Corrales & Hernández, 2009). These media seek out or disseminate content of social interest without being conditioned by their limitations or by external influences, as they are created outside the market and beyond state surveillance or control. In essence, these media offer news proposals or programs that differ from those of the dominant system (Serrano, 2011). Since the 1970s, in the Latin American context, they have developed from within communities, with a firm commitment to the various social movements and to the exercise of criticism against the hegemonic model, fostering horizontal, democratic and dialogical communication that seeks social transformation (Melendez-Labrador, 2016).

Alternative communication responds to the interests of citizens who are not heard; it is therefore committed to social transformation and to the pursuit of justice based on the exercise of freedom of expression (Fernández, 2023). It presents itself as a way of resisting predominant or hegemonic models (Tréguer et al., 2020).

In this context, alternative media develop certain strategies that differ markedly from the hegemonic model: exposing the lack of trustworthiness or credibility of traditional media and those in power, revealing their interests and their imbalanced reporting; they also seek to displace traditional media and to remain free from the influence of the market and power groups (Serrano, 2011). They stand in opposition to traditional media precisely because the latter pursue commercial ends through the selection of news, and citizens have little access to them when they wish to file a complaint or make a comment.

Alternative media are used to disseminate news or commentary on political or social issues that are ignored or excluded by traditional media (Tréguer et al., 2020). The arrival of new technologies has brought about the empowerment of citizens and the decentralization of media narratives that disseminate countercultural information through various networks, although it is also questioned whether citizens are genuinely emancipated by the participation they enjoy through digital media (García-Marín, 2020).

Alternative media develop in a variety of spheres and contexts. In the Colombian armed conflict, for example, they have helped consolidate spaces for reconciliation, education and the protection of human rights. Likewise, they take on the challenge of improving or transforming living conditions and of achieving reconciliation and peace for those in vulnerable situations (Ladino, 2022). They are mechanisms for disseminating information and generating spaces for peaceful coexistence on the basis of the conflicts they report. Along the same lines, Cruz-Castillo et al. (2023) refer to Colombian alternative media that have denounced the enforced disappearances and killings of community leaders in the Department of Meta, a conflict zone, following the Peace Agreement signed in 2016. A similar case occurred in Argentina, where a neighborhood assembly (in the Province of Buenos Aires) seeking to protect historic areas used the internet to create alternative media to replace traditional ones and established its own program to make its voice heard and improve its organization (Silva, 2018). In Spain, it has been found that these internet-based alternative media disseminate information ignored by traditional media, and that they adopt a variety of positions and models (Fleischman et al., 2009).

Community or alternative media must, moreover, develop within a technological framework that is consistent with the legal framework. It is important to consolidate their legal and political defense (Tréguer et al., 2020). They must also operate according to certain principles in order to achieve justice, eradicate inequalities, raise awareness and shake citizens out of their passivity (Serrano, 2011).

In the current context, the media are required to uphold or practice the ethics and values of journalism in order to face the challenges of information ecosystems and the diversity of information that is constantly being disseminated: they must be committed to truth, social responsibility and autonomy or independence (Espinoza, 2024).

Within the media sphere, it is important to analyze the political discourse disseminated through them, which generates diverse or conflicting emotions. In this context, some studies emphasize that emotions such as anger and anxiety may intensify during political campaigns. It has also been shown that political debates on social networks generate negative emotions (Humprecht et al., 2024).

Political information is ever-present in the media, but in many cases biases or partiality may arise in its dissemination. The constant influence of the media on politics, and vice versa, can be seen in a context in which capitalist investment and capital markets are dominant and governments tend toward populism (Cornejo, 2022). Political disinformation also occurs through distorted or manipulated images that attract more attention (Hameleers, 2024).

Furthermore, in Latin America, governments have been shown to restrict freedom of expression and undermine human rights in cases where militarization policies are adopted under strategies linked to the fight against terrorism or organized crime (Antonio-López, 2020).

Likewise, in Latin America, and specifically in Peru, citizens' perception of politics has changed, as they have lost trust in political institutions (such as parliament, the executive and the political parties themselves) and in the political system itself (Vílchez & Palomino, 2023).

When human rights are violated, the media do not always have an editorial line that denounces or criticizes the problem (Antonio-López, 2020). In alternative media, however, there is evidence of complaints and the dissemination of information on human rights violations committed by the government of the day.

Social conflicts arise from a variety of causes and take different forms. One form is a political or social dispute or disagreement between power or dominant groups and those who are dominated, which has no way out unless there is a solution or transformation. However, conflicts also appear as a form of socialization in which dissent and consensus coexist. In other cases, they are seen as an opportunity that can bring about change (Angulo-Giraldo & Bolo-Varela, 2021).

In this context, alternative media disseminate information on the basis of freedom of expression, with the aim of raising awareness of issues of collective or social interest that contribute to a better society.

2. Objectives

The main objective is to analyze the treatment of information on Peruvian politics in alternative media. Specifically, the following dimensions are analyzed: the actions or situation of authorities; protests or mobilizations; human rights; electoral issues; environmental problems; insecurity and killings; and the aspirations of indigenous communities. This will provide insight into the significant social role of the alternative media disseminated in Lima.

3. Method

The study is qualitative. It is based on content or discourse analysis of the political information conveyed through the alternative media of Lima.

The following alternative digital news outlets were selected for this study: *Servindi*, *Lamula*, *Wayka*, *IDL-Reporteros*, *El Perfil*, *Ojo Público*, *Convoca* and *Epicentro*. The information disseminated from 2024 to early January 2025 was considered. These media do not belong to the sphere of the state and maintain their independence, in accordance with the guidelines or policies they have established for their operation.

Some of these media engage in investigative journalism and specialize in corruption involving politicians or business people, as is the case of *IDL Reporteros*, *Ojo Público* and *Convoca* (Cornejo, 2022).

The following categories were systematized: actions or situation of authorities; protests or mobilizations; human rights; electoral issues; environmental problems; insecurity and killings; and aspirations of indigenous communities.

Brief description of each outlet:

*Lamula (*https://lamula.pe/) is a news outlet or platform founded in 2009 to publish stories and news related to current events. It allows users to publish content. It also disseminates information through Facebook and Twitter.

El Perfil (https://elperfil.pe/) defines itself as an independent outlet that defends the interests of citizens and the fight against corruption based on truthfulness. Its aim is to strengthen democracy and full citizenship through dynamic and dialogical communication.

Servindi (https://www.servindi.org/) describes itself as a small team based in Peru that identifies with the objectives, aspirations and agency of indigenous or native peoples and promotes plural and intercultural communication. It enables direct communication with users and is non-profit. It is based on the following values: identity, ethics, democracy, solidarity, diversity and interculturality. It has 20 years of experience.

Wayka (https://wayka.pe/) is a non-profit community outlet made up of journalists and professionals from other fields who are committed to participatory democracy, human rights, sustainable public policies and the fight against corruption, among other causes. It also regards itself as acting independently of economic and political elites, and seeks to counter the concentration of private media that hinders citizens' access to free and plural information. It is

based on critique, ethics, the pursuit of truth and social justice. It is funded by international foundations that defend human rights.

Ojo Público (https://ojo-publico.com/) is a news organization founded in Lima in 2014. It regards itself as a digital outlet that is a benchmark in Latin America. Its purpose is to defend democracy and human rights and to confront corruption and the powers of the state, among other things. It practices Big Data journalism and takes part in collaborative teams to combat fake news and disinformation. It has been rated by the University of Oxford as one of the most important and trusted media outlets in Peru. It is based on values such as independence, commitment, solidarity, rigor, innovation and transparency.

Convoca (https://convoca.pe/) is an investigative outlet founded in 2014 with an interdisciplinary approach. Its purpose is to investigate the political and corporate power that influences or affects people's lives. It has partnerships with international media and disseminates information in various formats (comics, video games) to reach a wider audience. It also trains professionals interested in journalism, promotes teamwork and practices journalism as a public service. It is funded by international organizations committed to supporting independent journalism, as well as through donations and subscriptions to the *Escuela Convoca*, small donations from readers and partnerships with other organizations (other media, universities and civil society organizations).

IDL Reporteros (https://n9.cl/v6b5n) is an outlet made up of a team of investigative journalists. Its publications focus on politics.

Epicentro.Tv (https://epicentro.tv/) was launched in July 2021. It regards itself as an independent outlet made up of journalists with experience in investigating relevant issues related to the commitment to democracy, human rights, the fight against corruption and the defense of the environment.

4. Analysis of the information from the various media

The results have been systematized by category.

4.1 Actions or situation of authorities

Political information is abundant, particularly regarding the current government, which has been criticized for not acting in the collective interest or that of citizens and for undermining democracy and human rights.

Several outlets report on the actions or situation of the authorities on the basis of objective data or criticisms. One example concerns the president of the Republic, whom 62% of respondents (according to Ipsos) rate as one of the most negative figures of 2024. In this regard, Jorge Paucar, writing in *Lamula*, explains that this is because "she faces criticism for her administration, marked by human rights violations, deaths in protests and a lack of clearly defined public policies" (https://n9.cl/2cqqg). A statistical figure showing the data or percentage is included to support this report.

Other news items concern the actions of members of Congress who have used public money for purposes other than those intended. In this case, *Lamula* reports that "according to the complaint, the congressmembers' airline tickets were allegedly paid for with Parliament's funds, constituting an alleged misuse of public resources" (https://n9.cl/s6tcu).

In other cases, the role of current politicians is called into question. The outlet *Lamula* quotes the statements of the director of a digital outlet who considers that there has been an ethical deterioration in public debate, and who emphatically states that "today you don't interview a politician, you take a police statement" (https://n9.cl/hvaun).

Other political cases are also reported, such as those of former presidents being tried for corruption—in this case, former president Toledo. A report by *Epicentro.TV* highlights that "the former president was found guilty of aggravated collusion and money laundering for favoring the Brazilian construction company" (https://n9.cl/7xt2pm). To demonstrate the objectivity of the report, several videos of the proceedings or trial against the former president are cited.

In other cases, the alliance between the current government and Congress has been denounced through the approval of laws that restrict or undermine citizens' freedom or right to protest. In this regard, *Servindi* states: "The bills presented by Congress and the Dina Boluarte regime on 'urban terrorism' clearly seek to criminalize those who protest against violations of their rights" (https://n9.cl/55kar).

Along the same lines, other reports agree that the government and Congress are behaving undemocratically. In this case, *Servindi* quotes another outlet as well as an expert who analyzes how the actions of these institutions are undermining democracy (https://n9.cl/cmbmu). In other reports by *Servindi*, it is reported that a government representative—the prime minister—has stated that the protesters, through their violent acts, were responsible for the deaths (https://n9.cl/wxcjq).

Other reports by *Servindi* emphasize the concentration of power in the current Congress. The IACHR (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights) has also spoken out on this issue, stating that the institution "... expressed its concern about information received on actions constituting political interference by the Congress of the Republic of Peru" (https://n9.cl/pw5iz).

Other reports, by the outlet *OjoPúblico*, discuss the weakening of institutions or the institutional crisis brought about by the current government, for example by appointing members of Osiptel, Ositran, Osinergmin and Sunass without a public competition (https://n9.cl/q4bvk).

Information is also reported on relatives of a number of members of Congress who hold contracts with the state despite this being legally prohibited (*OjoPúblico*, https://n9.cl/jcxgev).

Other reports focus on the role or function of Congress, which in many cases affects other institutions. One example is the weakening of the National Board of Justice through the removal of two of its members and the intervention of the Constitutional Court; in this specific case, the Constitutional Court violated the Constitution by reinstating the decision of Congress to remove some members of the National Board of Justice (*Convoca.pe*, https://n9.cl/endje). As a result of this action, the National Board of Justice cannot continue the proceedings against judges or prosecutors, as it does not have all its members, some having been removed by Congress (*Convoca.pe*, https://n9.cl/720z5). Other unconstitutional acts by Congress relate to preliminary and preparatory investigations, which must now be conducted by the police, whereas they were previously the responsibility of the Public Prosecutor's Office (*Convoca.pe*, https://n9.cl/v8orym).

Another action by Congress that affects NGOs and alternative media is its attempt to oversee alternative media because they disseminate information on human rights, the fight against corruption and other matters of collective interest. To this end, a preliminary report has been drafted that seeks to subject them to oversight (*Convoca.pe*, https://n9.cl/vlqmh).

News and reports on the actions of a Congress that concentrates power are recurrent. In this regard, *IDLReporteros* comments: "The coalition (with 5% approval and over 90% national disapproval) that currently controls Congress is concentrating its efforts on a new initiative aimed at fracturing, stifling and eviscerating non-governmental organizations" (https://n9.cl/9kwmr).

Congress is also promoting other laws that undermine human rights. In this regard, *Epicentro.tv* states:

The government told the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights that Congress facilitated a consultation process on the law establishing a statute of limitations for crimes against humanity. *Epicentro Tv* checked who had submitted opinions and found among the comments a long list of relatives of convicted criminals and fugitives. Wives, children and siblings of convicted

murderers and rapists declared themselves in favor of the Rospigliosi Cueto law. The victims were not informed of this democratic consultation process (https://n9.cl/p7zsuz).

Information is also reported on the increase in the assets of certain magistrates, in this case some members of the Constitutional Court. This information was obtained from their sworn asset declarations between 2022 and 2024 (*OjoPúblico*, https://n9.cl/xpnrld).

4.2 Protests or mobilizations

The political sphere is also linked to other issues, such as protests, which is why some outlets focus on this topic. Information is disseminated on the consequences of the protests: "Four community members sentenced for protesting against the Boluarte regime". In this regard, Moreno emphasizes, in *El Perfil*:

There is no one in prison in this country responsible for the 49 people killed by gunfire from the security forces between December 2022 and January 2023. Nor is there anyone in prison guilty of the disappearance of the indigenous leaders who defend the forests and their territories in the Peruvian jungle. However, four peasant farmers from Cusco have been jailed for protesting against the Dina Boluarte regime in January 2023 (https://n9.cl/m3od4).

In response, the defense lawyer has denounced serious irregularities in the proceedings. These news reports show the vulnerability of citizens from indigenous communities who suffer abuse at the hands of the current government.

In other cases, stemming from a historical problem, communities in the Amazon are protesting because the state fails to carry out prior consultation. In this regard, *Servindi* states: "Government sparks another conflict in the Amazon. It failed to honor agreements in favor of communities in oil blocks, and now indigenous people are announcing a major mobilization" (https://n9.cl/0g9z5).

Other forms of protest against corruption are also reported, such as the washing of flags carried out by the Network of Women of Metropolitan Lima (*Servindi*, https://n9.cl/7g37dg).

4.3 Human rights

Within the political topic, there are also events and news items related to human rights violations. Seminario, writing in *El Perfil*, describes how "trade associations, unions, student groups, relatives of the deceased and citizens in general protest in the Plaza Dos de Mayo while Dina Boluarte delivers her Independence Day speech" (https://n9.cl/hlejx).

Likewise, in the current political context, human rights are undermined in various ways. This is reported by *Servindi* in connection with the APEC summit: "While the government receives the presidents of China and the United States, arbitrary arrests, the firing of tear gas canisters and the criminalization of protesters are being reported in the streets" (https://n9.cl/3kq952). This shows the violation of certain rights, such as freedom of movement, through the arbitrary arrest of citizens demonstrating in public places.

Indigenous communities are also victims of invaders. In the face of this problem, several community leaders have lost their lives while the state remains inactive. As a result, the communities have decided to take on their own defense (*Servindi*, https://n9.cl/khalo).

4.4 Electoral issues

Other relevant topics concern activities related to the financing of political parties. Through "... the Standing Committee, [Congress] approved a report allowing political parties to receive exorbitant sums of money from private donors, which may be made confidentially through the Banco de la Nación" (*Wayka*, https://n9.cl/8oztt).

Other changes to the electoral system concern the selection of candidates by representatives made up of members and internal delegates, and the elimination of simultaneous and compulsory open primary elections (*Convoca.pe*, https://n9.cl/2207p).

Other reports, following the most recent elections in Peru, concern the false claims of alleged fraud committed by Castillo, the candidate who won the elections. In this regard, the outlet *IDLReporteros states*: "The fraud claimants attacked the electoral body for three years, using disinformation and actions in Congress, the media, social networks, the streets and the Constitutional Court" (https://n9.cl/oqz71).

4.5 Environmental problems

Environmental problems have various causes. One of these is forest fires, which is why a declaration of emergency has been requested. In this regard, *Servindi* reports: "Regional governments, the Ombudsman's Office and the professional associations of biologists and anthropologists, among others, are demanding that the government declare an environmental emergency over the forest fires" (https://n9.cl/eve09f).

Subsequently, the government "... announced that a state of emergency will be declared in Amazonas, San Martín and Ucayali due to the forest fires, which have already left 16 dead and 140 injured" (Servindi, https://n9.cl/tsmry).

Another problem affecting the environment is mining activity in the indigenous communities of Puno. *Wayka.pe* denounces that "the Aymara communities of southern Puno once again face the threat of mining. Since the start of the Dina Boluarte regime, mining concessions have been reactivated (...) between Peru and Bolivia" (https://n9.cl/0ktca).

Other reports concern complaints filed by representatives of various organizations against officials or authorities who promote anti-forest laws that affect the inhabitants of the Amazon. In this regard, *Epicentro Tv* states:

The offenses charged in connection with the implementation of the "Anti-Forest Law" are the unlawful taking over of pending proceedings and the illegal granting of rights, plus a third offense of omission of official duties owing to the Executive's poor response to the forest fires, which, according to the criminal complaint, are seen as a consequence of the aforementioned law, passed by Congress last January (https://n9.cl/wbssf).

4.6 Insecurity and killings

Other problems, such as insecurity and killings, which are serious and affect society, need to be resolved urgently. In this context, following the declaration of a state of emergency that has produced no results, Seminario states in *El Perfil* that:

The president of the Republic, Dina Boluarte, inexplicably remains silent as alarmed citizens learn that in the early hours of today a huge fire destroyed 25 public transport buses, just a few hours after a successful strike called by transport workers to demand an end to extortion and killings (https://n9.cl/yvi3x).

In other cases, there is not only insecurity but something even more serious: the killing of business people and community leaders. It is clear that the state of emergency has not been effective. Reports on this subject are disseminated; in this case, Alba recounts in *El Perfil*:

Hitmen linked to organized crime murdered Arturo Cárdenas, general secretary of the Union of Civil Construction Workers of Lima and Balnearios. The attack took place at around 5 p.m. on 15 August, as Cárdenas was leaving the union premises in the district of La Victoria (https://n9.cl/95na2).

4.7 The aspirations of indigenous communities

Some outlets disseminate information on communities' aspirations to participate in politics. Through *Servindi*, it is reported that "meeting for two days, indigenous people from seven regions of the Amazon discussed actions to achieve better political representation that would allow them to advance their own demands" (https://n9.cl/riig1).

In this context, only a few outlets focus on disseminating the aspirations, problems or needs of indigenous communities, which for many years have been, and continue to be, excluded or marginalized by successive governments.

5. Discussion

After systematizing the news and information from the various outlets, it is evident that the news focuses mainly on the actions or situation of authorities who commit acts that are at odds with the law and that undermine democracy and human rights. The institutions that attract the most coverage are the current government and Congress, which hold power, with greater emphasis on the latter.

In this context, only a few outlets focus on disseminating the aspirations, problems or needs of indigenous communities, which for years have been, and continue to be, excluded or marginalized by successive governments.

The news and information disseminated by the media studied analyze current politics as conveyed through technological media such as websites, blogs, etc. (Corrales & Hernández, 2009). In this context, they denounce anti-democratic acts and the concentration of power by certain authorities in the current government and certain members of Congress. For example, they have reported on the unpopularity of Peru's president, whom 62% consider one of the most negative figures of 2024. This is because, at the beginning of her term, there was a series of human rights violations. To this must be added the actions of some members of Congress who use public money for personal gain. These actions show that alternative media do not allow themselves to be conditioned by the external influences created by state surveillance or control, and that they produce or publish information that differs from that of the dominant system (Serrano, 2011).

Likewise, there is evidence of the denunciation of former authorities or former presidents convicted of corruption, such as former president Alejandro Toledo, who once wielded considerable power. In the same context, various outlets report on the concentration of power through the alliance established between the current government and Congress to restrict the right to protest through bills that seek to criminalize protesters, for which purpose they have created the offense of "urban terrorism". In this sense, alternative media stand apart from, and are neither aligned with nor under the influence of, power groups (Serrano, 2011). They demonstrate independence in the dissemination of information. This concentration of power, especially by Congress, has had repercussions and reactions abroad; for example, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has expressed concern about the information received regarding political interference by Congress. Specific cases include interference against the National Board of Justice, two of whose members were removed, and the attempt to subject NGOs and alternative media to oversight. In other cases, human rights are undermined through the drafting or promotion of laws that seek to establish a statute of limitations for crimes against humanity. This conduct on the part of the authorities and government representatives has caused citizens to lose trust in political institutions such as parliament, the executive, political parties and the political system in general (Vílchez & Palomino, 2023).

That same power has led to silence over the deaths that occurred during the protests (in 2022 and 2023), as reported by *El Perfil*: no one is in prison for the deaths of 49 people killed by gunfire from the security forces, nor has anyone been held responsible for the disappearance of indigenous people. However, four community members have reportedly been convicted simply for protesting against the current government. The defense lawyer argues that there were serious irregularities in the proceedings against them. There is clear silence over the deaths in the protests,

coupled with the abuse of power against those who protest, limiting their right to freedom of expression. In this sense, the information provided by alternative media shows that they act with truthfulness, responsibility and independence (Espinoza, 2024). It also shows that governments—in this case, that of Peru—restrict freedom of expression and undermine human rights by resorting to strategies such as the fight against terrorism or organized crime (Antonio-López, 2020).

On the other hand, some alternative media, such as *Servindi*, disseminate information on the aspirations and reality of indigenous communities that wish to participate in political life. Likewise, *Wayka.pe* reports on mining activities, which have increased under the current government, specifically in the indigenous communities of Puno. To this must be added the problems reported by *Epicentro Tv* regarding the creation of anti-forest laws that affect the population of the Amazon. These issues respond to the interests of those who are not attended to or heard and who seek social transformation and justice on the basis of freedom of expression (Melendez-Labrador, 2016). Along these lines, in response to the problem of insecurity and killings, justice is sought for the families of those who have lost their lives. Among the victims are business people and community leaders—in this case, the murder of the general secretary of the Union of Civil Construction Workers of Lima, as reported by *El Perfil*.

Based on the contributions and the news and information disseminated by alternative media, it can be seen that they are spaces that can bring about change (Angulo-Giraldo & Bolo-Varela, 2021); they also seek to eradicate inequalities, raise awareness and shake citizens out of their passivity (Serrano, 2011). In this sense, they are important because they generate social change or transformation, promote collective awareness, confront power and expose the intentions that lie behind it. They therefore establish or foster horizontal, democratic communication (Melendez-Labrador, 2016).

6. Conclusions

Alternative media disseminate relevant information on the excesses or abuses committed by the current government and Congress, which attempt to influence other state institutions. They also emphasize the alliance between these two state bodies, which concentrate or abuse the power they hold.

Likewise, they disseminate information on environmental pollution affecting the indigenous population, as well as on mining activity, which has increased under the current government. Added to these problems are threats against, and killings of, business people and community leaders, with no evidence of concrete government action to address these growing problems.

There is also evidence of abuse of power by Congress, which has changed the rules on candidates for presidential elections, restricting open, democratic participation and instead ensuring that only party leaders have the opportunity to stand. Non-transparent funding of political parties is also exposed and denounced.

Alternative media disseminate a range of information of collective or social interest, such as the illegal actions of politicians and the authorities of the day, as well as other problems affecting society, such as killings, corruption, environmental and mining problems, and the criminalization of protests against the anti-democratic actions of current government representatives.

Finally, information—albeit very limited—stands out regarding the aspiration of indigenous communities to participate in political activities, despite having been excluded or marginalized from these processes for decades.

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