

Methodological challenges in the study of Peruvian news media system

Retos metodológicos en el estudio del sistema de medios informativos en el Perú

Desafios metodológicos no estudo do sistema de mídia da informação no Peru

Jessica Retis, Universidad de Arizona, Tucson, Estados Unidos (jessicaretis@arizona.edu)

Lilian Kanashiro, Universidad de Lima, Lima, Perú (lkanashi@ulima.edu.pe)

Wendy Domenack, Universidad de Lima, Lima, Perú (wdomenac@ulima.edu.pe)

ABSTRACT | A strong media system is crucial when facing various types of crises. In Latin America, it becomes challenging to characterize media systems due to the weakness of their structural institutionalization as well as the modernization processes. In this contribution, we address methodological challenges when elaborating a database of news media outlets that could allow us to conduct consistent and comparative analyses of journalism practices with an international scope. When analyzing the Peruvian case, we face two main challenges. On the one hand, there is no national census of journalists or news media outlets; on the other hand, the institutionalization of Peruvian media remains precarious. Facing these challenges, we used a triangulation of sources as methodological strategy to elaborate a reliable survey despite the evident informal nature of certain outlets, the precarious digital identification, and the traditional categorizations that were mostly based on legacy media that become insufficient when examining these practices in a transmedia scenario.

KEYWORDS: media; journalism; methodology; Peru.

HOW TO CITE

Retis, J., Kanashiro, L., & Domenack, W. (2021). Retos metodológicos en el estudio del sistema de medios informativos en el Perú. *Cuadernos.info*, (50), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.7764/cdi.50.27321>

RESUMEN | *Un sistema de medios informativos sólido es crucial para enfrentar diversos tipos de crisis. No obstante, caracterizar dichos sistemas en países latinoamericanos plantea dilemas propios de una institucionalización estructuralmente débil, de procesos de modernización acelerados o en curso. Nuestro objetivo es reconocer los desafíos metodológicos en la constitución de una base de datos de medios informativos que permitan análisis consistentes y comparativos sobre las condiciones del ejercicio periodístico en el mundo. Para ello, nos basamos en el caso peruano, que no cuenta con bases de datos, de medios ni de periodistas de alcance nacional y en el que la institucionalización de los medios es precaria. Hemos utilizado como estrategia metodológica la triangulación de fuentes. Entre las principales dificultades está la informalidad dentro de los medios formales, una huella digital precaria y la insuficiencia de categorizaciones basadas en un sistema analógico en una sociedad en proceso de transmedialización.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *medios de comunicación; periodismo; metodología; Perú.*

RESUMO | *Um sistema de mídia sólido resulta crucial para lidar com diferentes tipos de crises. No entanto, caracterizar os sistemas em países da América Latina se confronta aos dilemas próprios de uma institucionalização estruturalmente débil ou de processos de modernização acelerados ou em andamento. Nosso objetivo é reconhecer os desafios metodológicos na elaboração de uma base de dados de mídias jornalísticas que permitam análises consistentes e comparativos sobre as condições do exercício jornalístico no mundo. Para isso, fundamentamo-nos no caso peruano que não conta com bases de dados de mídias e nem de jornalistas de alcance nacional; e no qual a institucionalização das mídias é precária. Temos utilizado como estratégia metodológica a triangulação de fontes. Entre as principais dificuldades temos a informalidade dentro dos meios formais, uma impressão digital precária e a insuficiência das categorizações baseadas em um sistema analógico em uma sociedade em processo de transmídiação.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *mídia; jornalismo; metodologia; Peru.*

INTRODUCTION

To characterize the media systems of Latin American countries is difficult, since they face dilemmas of structurally weak institutionalization, accelerated or ongoing modernization processes. A trend found in the region is the high concentration of media ownership (Sinclair, 1999; Becerra & Mastrini, 2006, 2009, 2017). This oligopolistic system tends to monopolize advertising revenues and dominate the production of information flows (Waisbord, 2000; Protzel, 1994, 2014). In Peru, concentric synergies have resulted in a reinforced presence of media conglomerates (Gargurevich, 2012; Impresos, n.d.; Open Society Foundations, 2010; Lovatón, 2016).

Studying the media system in this country presents a series of methodological challenges, due to the scarcity of reliable data that allow obtaining a clear picture of the institutional fabric on which information flows are based. On the other hand, the centralized nature of information production blurs the importance of regional and local media. As a consequence, the dynamics in the other 23 regions of the country are practically invisible. Since there is no unified registry in Peru that offers a clear idea of the characteristics of the media ecosystem in general, this research project seeks to contribute to the elaboration of an indicative mapping of the media state. We seek to identify how many media outlets operate, the predominant conglomerates that concentrate ownership, and the geographic distribution of information flows in the country. To systematize the Peruvian media ecosystem, we face a series of methodological challenges that may constitute a reference framework for similar studies in the region. We therefore ask ourselves: What are the main methodological challenges for studying the Peruvian media ecosystem?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Studying the media system at the national level poses a number of challenges. While media and communication research has experienced both institutional and disciplinary globalization (Waisbord, 2009; Boczkowski & Mitchelstein, 2019), comparative analyses require greater conceptual and theoretical clarity, as without a conceptual compass comparative research risks becoming stranded (Hanitzsch et al., 2019; Gurevitch & Blumler, 2004; Norris, 2009). As Hanitzsch and colleagues (2019) posit, the demand for theoretical universalism can lead to measurement that is insensitive to the reality of each country and efforts to tailor local level analysis can be frustrating when accessing comparative and systematic analysis. Therefore, our study seeks to form a theoretical basis that incorporates the specificities of the Peruvian context, but that can also be compared at the regional and global level.

The Western hegemonic model of journalism has long conceptualized the journalist as an independent professional and verifier of information for the sake of public service (Nerone, 2013), which is the product of an occupational ideology exported to the world as a professional standard of measurement (Golding, 1977). The concentration of studies in the Global North has produced a bias that relates journalism to the idea of democracy, something that occurs in a minority of the world's population (Hanitzsch et al., 2019). Paradoxically, academic production has experienced an anti-democratic trend that has privileged a narrower journalistic world (Zelizer, 2013). Waisbord and Mellado (2014) claimed the urgent need to de-Westernize scientific knowledge about communicative and informational realities. The Global South needs to make itself heard more forcefully for the sake of the democratization of research and, in this regard, Latin America has much to contribute (Retis & Sierra, 2011).

In the Worlds of Journalism framework, journalism is conceptualized as a discursive institution, regardless of whether is a profession, an occupation, a trade, a business (Zelizer, 2004), or the watchdog of government institutions. By incorporating de-Westernized approaches, it is posited to consider that in other regions journalists assume the responsibility of preserving harmony in society or respect for authority (Masterton, 1996; Xu, 2005), or have a more active and participating role within the political discourse (Hanitzsch et al., 2011; Pintak, 2014). Incorporating the new ways of exercising the profession into the discussion is also proposed, as well as new theoretical perspectives, adopting the framework of discursive institutionalism, an approach that has been developing from political science (Schmidt, 2008, 2010). In this regard, two main theoretical approaches are suggested: that journalism is a social institution and that it is discursively (re)created (Hanitzsch & Vos, 2017; 2018; Hanitzsch et al., 2019). In the case of Latin America, as Mellado (2009) states, one of the problems that arise when studying journalism and the journalist is managing to define the common structural framework that defines them.

In this article we focus on the institutional dimension to put the Peruvian reality into an international perspective. The corporate framework of journalism is composed of rules, conventions, and practices that are enabling, limiting, and constitutive. This framework includes formal structures as well as informal rules and procedures (Hanitzsch et al., 2019). In the Latin American context, as stated by Waisbord (2009), studies continue to explore the prospects of democratic journalism, but there are also debates on globalization, cosmopolitanism, and new institutionalism. Studying political and economic structures continues to be very relevant, because old problems persist. First, the collusion between the State apparatus and mercantile interests continues to undermine the possibilities of democratic means. Secondly, the emergence of populist and conservative

administrations in the region in recent years has introduced conflicts between governments and journalistic organizations. Thirdly, it is important that research advances in exploring the links between the press and the status quo. Likewise, new issues have been introduced, such as technological advances, which have entailed changes in the modes of reporting and news production, and have also facilitated the emergence of new journalistic models (civic, independent, non-profit, among others) (Waisbord & Mellado, 2014).

Studies on the press in Peru have pointed out the trends of recent decades (Vivas, 2008; Freundt-Thurne et al., 2013; Cueva et al., 2020). The contemporary history of the media system portrays a strong concentration of ownership, a close or strained relationship with political power and a third way in which new models of professional practice emerge. As Protzel (2014) points out, it is essential to incorporate in our reflection the sociocultural, sociolinguistic, and socioeconomic contexts in the conception of journalistic audiences. In his critique, he states that the term coevolution used to explain the parallel growth of mass media with political systems is not applicable to the Peruvian case. The decomposition of the social fabric, along with the implementation of neoliberal public order measures, reconfigured the media system and the relationship with the government. The benefits of the popular press hid a series of State subsidies and intelligence services under Fujimori's leadership. However, after his mandate, this type of press proved to be a lucrative business model since its readership would continue to grow.

Other research analyzes the risks posed by the trend towards media concentration in Peru (Santillán, 2017), particularly significant in the case of the written press (Acevedo, 2016). The danger that media concentration poses to democracy and freedom of expression has also been examined (Chanduvi, 2014; Acevedo, 2017). Moreover, in the Peruvian case media conglomerates have been advancing in their business strategies to become what some have called the news' owners, to emphasize the narrow margin of control of information flows in the hands of a few entrepreneurs (Castilla et al., 2016). On the other hand, the country is becoming a risky territory for the professional practice, as its representatives have been denouncing (Lainez, 2014).

The relationship between the media and populist presidents is responsible for the two most important chapters in the history of contemporary Peruvian media (Gargurevich, 2012). The first is the confiscation of newspapers and television stations by the military government of Velasco Alvarado in 1974; the second, the extensive corruption of editorial lines during the Fujimori government in the 1990s. Both episodes have contributed to a general loss of press credibility. Peruvian television remains centralist: most of its content is produced in the capital and transmitted to the rest of the country through repeater stations

(Cueva et al., 2020). The transition to digital terrestrial television (DTT) dates back to November 2006; however, the digital signal was not officially launched until March 30, 2010, when *TVPerú* began broadcasting in high definition. The migration to digital is expected to be completed by 2024 (Freundt-Thurne et al., 2013).

The Peruvian television and radio business model has developed similarly to the Western liberal model based on the sale of advertising. The economic boom of the fifties favored the growth of radio groups and, shortly after, the consolidation of media conglomerates. Little by little, the panorama consolidated the centralization of commercial strategies in the capital, which has been critically verified in our recent data review. In their comparative study on Latin America, Becerra and Mastrini (2006) found that the concentration of the daily press in Peru reached a very high level in relation to turnover and a lower level in terms of circulation. In the case of radio, they found that the level of ownership concentration was higher than the regional average, due to the concentration of advertising investment. The concentration of income is very relevant if we consider that only four out of a thousand radio stations accounted for obtain more than 66% of it. According to its scale, free-to-air television in Peru reaches a very high level of concentration, both in terms of revenue and audiences, which is enhanced since it concentrates more than 75% of advertising investment.

In addition, the market dominance of the first cable TV operator stood as the highest level of concentration of all Latin American countries studied by Becerra and Mastrini (2006). In their most recent regional study, which does not include data from Peru, they highlight the following suggestions for analysis: incorporate the effects of the profound technological transformation, the infrastructures used to produce and distribute content, commercial strategies, links with users, and work processes. They argue that concentration has led to a reduction of information sources, less plurality of broadcasters, unification of the editorial line, impoverishment of deliberation in the public space, a relative homogenization of genres and formats, predominance of styles and themes, and a concomitant occlusion of themes and formats, as well as the trend towards the exclusivity of the right of distribution/exhibition of events of general interest. All this enhances the precariousness of employment and weakens news quality (Becerra & Mastrini, 2017).

METHODOLOGY

There is currently no unified media registry in Peru. Therefore, we set ourselves the task of developing a design that would combine State, public, and private information. The study began in 2019 and is in the initial phase of the process,

so we have developed an eminently descriptive and interpretative analysis that allows us to systematize the methodological challenges that may be useful for other research in similar contexts of institutional precariousness.

After a specialized bibliographic review, two premises should be considered. First, the identification of Peruvian news media requires a source of formal data based on local regulation. Secondly, since the studies are based on an analogical perspective that categorizes the media according to their support, we consider that the convergence and multiplatform orientation of the digital phenomenon calls into question the way of analyzing and categorizing the media, giving a greater predominance to media brands.

With the aim of documenting the complexity of the Peruvian media system, we began to make similar preliminary approaches that resulted in the finding we explained above. As we progressed in data collection, incorporating the regions farther away from the capital, we corroborated how the initial data revealed a centralist view and a reality where digital convergence had changed the media structure. During the collection we opted to maintain a flexible view, allowing the data obtained to question our methodological protocols of collection and analysis, and assuming the need to triangulate the sources of information to give greater strength to the systematized data.

Considering the methodological literature, it was deemed appropriate to triangulate State, public, and self-referenced sources. The former are understood as those administered by government institutions in the exercise of their functions granted by law. We consider public sources to be private initiatives that produce media registries for greater recognition in society. Finally, self-referenced sources refer to the publication by the medium of its corporate identity. The proposed triangulation allows the integration of three voices for greater plurality and scope: State, institutional, and communicational. The criteria to be labeled as an informative medium was to be registered in the state Source and in one of the two additional sources: private or self-referenced.

To select public sources, we followed the legality criterion, i.e., to collect data in sources that grant recognition in accordance with national law. The information on radio and television was obtained from databases of the Ministry of Transportation and Communications (MTC) (Estaciones autorizadas, n.d.). Radio and television frequencies are State property and the entity in charge by law of assigning frequencies is the MTC, giving a legal and formal status to those who use them.

In the case of radio frequencies, we obtained 5,745 records and 2,021 for television. In both cases, no differentiation was made between types of frequencies:

broadcaster and repeater. On the other hand, the frequencies were assigned to legal entities that did not necessarily coincide with the media brands recognized by the audiences. Considering this, we designed a protocol to reduce the number of repeated legal entities until the number of radio brands was obtained. This work was developed between October 2019 and January 2020, obtaining a total of 995 radio brands and 118 television brands¹ formally operating in Peru; it is certain that, of them, 347 radios and 85 television channels have information spaces. We detected numerous frequencies assigned to companies or natural persons of which there is no information on their operations and were thus not considered in the registry.

In the case of the press, it was decided to request the information from the National Superintendence of Tax Administration (SUNAT², by its Spanish acronym), considering that all journalistic companies must have a tax registry that gives them a formal status. Thus, a total of 299 daily, weekly, bimonthly, monthly, and quarterly publications were obtained. A similar reduction protocol was applied, obtaining a total of 187 publications. The remaining ones were discarded (112) as we were unable to verify recent editions during 2019 or information on their active operation. Likewise, we highlighted those that produced topical information (181 publications). Table 1 shows the result of the application of reduction protocols to the databases obtained.

The information obtained from public databases provides an overview of the legal and natural persons behind the legal authorization to operate as a media outlet. The databases obtained from the two official sources (MTC and SUNAT) were cross-checked in a second stage with several private databases of public access to complete the information obtained from the public ones.

To select public sources, we evaluated platforms that met the following criteria: open and free access, offer regional information about the country, participatory dynamics to add and update information, and access to corroborate the medium's operation.

1. They include analog, digital terrestrial and pay TV brands. Peruvian television today coexists between analog and digital systems, in addition to pay TV companies. The analog switch-off is scheduled for 2022 (Decreto Supremo N° 006-2020-MTC, 2020). Free digital terrestrial television is a recent phenomenon promoted by the State. Currently, there are only 30 frequencies assigned in this category (Canales que transmiten TDT, n.d.). On the other hand, public information on cable companies is limited, and even more so the grid of television brands and the programming of exclusive channels.

2. Unlike the radio and television cases, these data were formally requested, invoking the Law on Access to Public Information (No. 27806).

Media type	Brands	Brands with informative production
Radio	995	347
Television	118	85
Press	187	181
Total	1300	613

Table 1. Brands identified in official databases

Source: Own elaboration.

In the case of radio stations, the Radios en América Latina (<https://www.radio-america-latina.org>) and Planeta radios (<http://www.planetaradios.com>) databases were used. For television, we utilized the lists published in Wikipedia (Televisión en el Perú, 2020) and Adonde.com. Other private television databases were overly centralized in television stations based in the capital. In the case of press, the private databases of PrensaEscrita.com, TN Relaciones (<http://www.tnrelaciones.com>) and Perú Quiosco (peruquiosco.pe) were used. Finally, with the information available, the webpages published by the media themselves were investigated and reviewed.

The data collection protocol established as a starting point the concept of news media, “media organizations that have their own news program or news section” (Worlds of Journalism, 2012, p. 1), and the traditional classification of radio, television, and press. After the preliminary extraction of public and private databases, we began the review of the information published by the media themselves. To select and validate the self-referenced sources, both webpages and social networks (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) were considered; those active in the last six months at the time of verification were registered.

The protocol included the registration of the media brand, the scope, the type of media, and whether it had news programs, the type of verification, the number and regions in which it operates, and the link from which the information was obtained. In this context, we consider media brand to be the name by which the media outlet is known. Secondly, we considered the media reach in three categories: local (one region), regional (2 to 17 regions), and national (18 to 25 regions, 75% of the national territory). Thirdly, to identify the type of media, in those with a webpage or social networks, we checked whether they showed information on their programming. In those that published it, we coded whether they had informative segments or programming. The type of verification was recorded in two codes, online when the information was obtained through digital media, and in situ when

the information was obtained by a field team in the area. As part of a pilot test, a border region was visited to verify the information. The number and regions in which the media operates were also recorded. In this regard, we found two difficulties: media that do not publish information on the subject and information dispersion. Finally, the digital link was recorded for further verification.

RESULTS

The methodological challenges found in data collection have been grouped into two areas: the sources of information needed to give legitimacy to the representation of an information ecosystem and the categorizations used for its organization.

Information sources for an ecosystem

Regarding the sources of information, it is necessary to discuss, on the one hand, the weight of formality and media legislation and, on the other, the preponderance of the digital footprint. On the issue of media formality and regulation, it is likely that the sociocultural context contributes to a chronic institutional weakness. Thus, we face the dilemma of formal institutions with informal practices. A formal media conforms to rules and regulations. However, we find that within formality there are informal forms of operation.

The case of radio provides an interesting illustration. *Bethel Radio* (<http://bethelradio.fm/>) is a national-scope religious radio station, with a news program broadcast twice a day. Of all the frequencies identified with this radio station, most are assigned to Asociación Cultural Bethel, as recorded in the MTC's records. A smaller number of frequencies are assigned to individuals or associations with another name. This case illustrates the figure of a formal radio station through the indicator of the corporate name to which the frequencies are assigned. However, there are other cases of news media that operate by subleasing frequencies as a strategy to have a greater reach. An example is the regional radio station *La Ribereña* (<http://gruporiberena.com/>), with a news segment that reaches 12 regions of the country. There are up to 20 social reasons to which its frequencies are attached. Another similar case is *Radio María* (<https://www.radiomariaperu.org/>), a religious radio station with national reach, with an informative program, with frequencies assigned to 12 different social reasons. The phenomenon of frequency subleasing is not an illegal act, although the responsibility of the different actors involved concerning the content and working conditions of those who produce the information is not clear.

The situation is more stable in the case of television, which presents congruence between social reasons and media brands. In the case of the press, there are

some national regulations to be considered. The legal deposit obliges authors and publishers to deliver a number of copies to the National Library of Peru (BNP, by its Spanish acronym), in order to preserve the national bibliographic collection (Depósito legal, n.d.). Out of 181 informative periodicals, in 49 cases it was not possible to verify the registration of the legal deposit through the BNP database. We cannot identify whether this is due to registration problems in the public database or to omissions by the newspaper companies. A case we can mention is *Don Jaque*, a newspaper with local circulation in the Madre de Dios region, which defines itself as a judicial newspaper. It has tax registration, but the legal deposit in the BNP was not identified. In seven other newspapers we found no indication of the legal deposit record, either in the digitalized printed versions or in the BNP. This situation is repeated in the local newspapers *Pregón* (Apurímac), *Hocicón* (Ayacucho), *El Cumbe* (Cajamarca), *El Siglo* (Huánuco), *Nuevo Norte* (La Libertad), and *Hoy* (San Martín). However, all the aforementioned media have a unique and identifiable corporate name, which could be due to the need to register as a business to obtain advertising revenues.

Regarding the media's digital footprint, it showed us the digital gap between the urban centers of higher population density, with greater connectivity, and the urban and rural centers of lower population density and connectivity. Of the 347 informative radios or with informative segments, all had a digital footprint. Therefore, the digital divide understood as access or non-access to digital resources is questionable. However, there are differences in the quality of the digital footprint as illustrated below.

Some radio stations have a webpage that provides information about the radio station, especially its programming. An example of local reach in southern Peru is *Contacto Sur* (<http://radiocontactosur.com/programacion/>), whose website shows a varied programming and various news segments. In this case, the platform is an analog radio broadcasting support. However, not all radio brands identified have this level of digital presence. Of 347 news radio stations with a digital footprint, 129 had a Facebook account as their main digital support. Some accounts were more active than others. An example of an active account is that of *Radio Sepahua* (Radio Sepahua 100.5 FM - La señal que integra, n.d.), with local reach (Loreto Region) and varied programming, with 4,025 followers (02/21/2020). The Facebook account publishes interviews of the station, local news, and news from nearby regions. An opposite case is the Facebook account of *Radio Amistad 99.1 FM* (Radio Amistad 99.1 FM - Más fuerte que nunca, n.d.) of local reach (Cajamarca Region), with varied programming (342 followers as of 08/12/2021). Last publication was on September 22, 2017. More than accessibility to digital resources, we find different digital competencies that make the radio station more visible.

As for television, out of 85 companies with news production, we found that all of them have some form of digital footprint. Half of them have websites and the rest mainly use a Facebook account for broadcasting. We can establish three types of digital presence in television: (1) webpages whose function is to support live broadcasts of programs, in addition to information related to the television station, (2) Facebook accounts where they publish broadcasts of television programs, and (3) webpages that publish information about the television station, some including programming, but do not publish content.

A case that illustrates the first type is the religiously-oriented television station *JN19* (<http://www.jn19television.com/>), based in Lima, with news programs and national reach. Its webpage offers live analog broadcasting. A similar situation, but through Facebook, is that of the local TV station *Canal 33* of the Lambayeque region. It does not offer much information about the channel, but on a Facebook account the journalists of *Pulso TV Canal 33* (*Pulso TV Canal 1*, n.d.) publish recorded broadcasts of their news programs. The third type is illustrated by *TVSUR* (<https://www.tvsur.com.pe/>), based in Puno. It has a varied programming, with informative segments. Its webpage shows the programs it produces and its programming. The television station's staff generates the news information on the website.

In the case of the informative press, out of 181 newspapers, all had a digital reference, which varies significantly. We can establish three types of digital presence: (1) webpages that are digital versions of the printed newspaper, (2) subscription platforms whose function is to market the digitalized version of the printed newspaper, and (3) the Facebook account that promotes the consumption of the sale of the printed version.

The first type is a webpage that eventually publishes the same news as the printed version and offers the service of updating them with details during the day. An example is the regional newspaper *La Industria* (<http://www.laindustria.pe/>), based in the La Libertad region. It has two regional versions (Ancash, <http://www.laindustria.pe/> and Lambayeque, <https://www.laindustriadechiclayo.pe/>). Each regional version has a webpage that publishes updated information from the printed version and the front page of the printed version. The webpage includes the information published on social networks.

A second type of digital presence are the payment platforms to obtain the digitalized printed versions, i.e., the printed paper newspaper in PDF file. This is the case of the daily *Correo* (<https://diariocorreo.pe/>), a regional newspaper based in Lima, with 13 regional versions. Its website publishes updated versions of the news of the printed version. The regional versions do not have an autonomous website; their publications are contained in the central website and labeled

by geographic location. Additionally, the digitalized printed version is marketed through the platform Perú Quiosco (2020), which shows the newspapers' front pages. Finally, as a third type, we have Facebook accounts. This is the case of *Diario El Clarín de Amazonas* (Diario El Clarín Amazonas, n.d.), of local scope. It uses its Facebook account to publish the covers of its daily edition, not the contents, as a strategy to boost the purchase of the printed newspaper.

Categorizations

Another methodological challenge in systematizing the media is related to the categorizations used to organize the media system and the organizational hierarchy of media companies.

Regarding the first, the media have traditionally been categorized according to their support: radio, television, and press. In the Peruvian case, the Ministry of Transportation and Communication manages radio and television frequencies. The press, being a publishing product, is managed through the National Library of Peru, which belongs to the Ministry of Education. In the current media ecosystem, the categorization of radio, television, and press faces the challenge of digital convergence. The categorization of brands in which several media converge –radio, television, or print– causes in some cases a triple or double recording.

We can examine the case of *Exitosa*, with *Exitosa Radio*, *Exitosa TV*, and *Exitosa Diario* (<https://exitosanoticias.pe/v1/>), which has national reach. The television signal is a live broadcast from the radio station. The news published in the printed version of the newspaper are reproduced through its website. We wonder in this situation whether it should be considered as one media or as three, as one brand or as three media brands, in order to avoid over- or under-representation of a media outlet.

What criteria can be used to configure an observation unit? At first glance, it could be considered the most recognized support for a communication medium. This means that, if a medium is historically recognized as a radio, it should be registered only as a radio and ignore its other supports. However, the evolution of the media that enhances the informative function in new platforms calls into question the appropriateness of this. A second criterion is whether the informative programming is equivalent between one medium and another, in order to consider it as a single medium. This is possible in the case of radio and television, which present the same programming, but not in the case of television and press, whose content organization is different. Another criterion is the media's journalistic teams: if there are autonomous journalistic teams in one medium and another, they could be considered as different media. If a single journalistic team produces information for three media, it could be considered a single one.

A case in point is *Radio Programas del Perú* (<https://rpp.pe/>), historically known by the phrase *radio is closer to the people*. With a national scope, its programming is mainly informative. In addition to *RPP radio*, we also have *RPP TV*. In this case, the programming of both media coincides with some informative programs or segments and in others, it is different.

The second methodological challenge, related to the organizational hierarchy of media companies, confronts us with concepts such as media group or conglomerate, media outlet, and media brand. By conglomerate we mean an organizational entity that groups together several media or media brands. A second conceptual category is the media outlet, which may be a business organization, whether for-profit or not-for-profit. The media brand is the name by which a media outlet is known to its public. Media business groups acquire importance, insofar as they pose the dilemma of media concentration and the interference of the media conglomerate interests in the journalists who produce the information. An example of this is *Grupo ATV*, which manages six television channels: *ATV*, *ATV+*, *ATV Sur*, *La Tele*, *América Next*, and *ATV.pe* (digital media).

Nevertheless, the hierarchy between conglomerate and dependent media does not apply to all cases and is more complex. This is the case of *América Televisión*, which operates under the corporate name *Corporación Peruana de Radiodifusión*, owned by *Grupo Plural TV*. This is defined as a consortium, formed by brands such as the newspaper *El Comercio* and *Canal N* (owned by the *El Comercio* group), the newspaper *La República* (owned by the *La República* group), and *Next TV*, owned by the *Plural TV Group* in alliance with the *ATV Group*. These media, by forming the consortium, become owners of *América Televisión*.

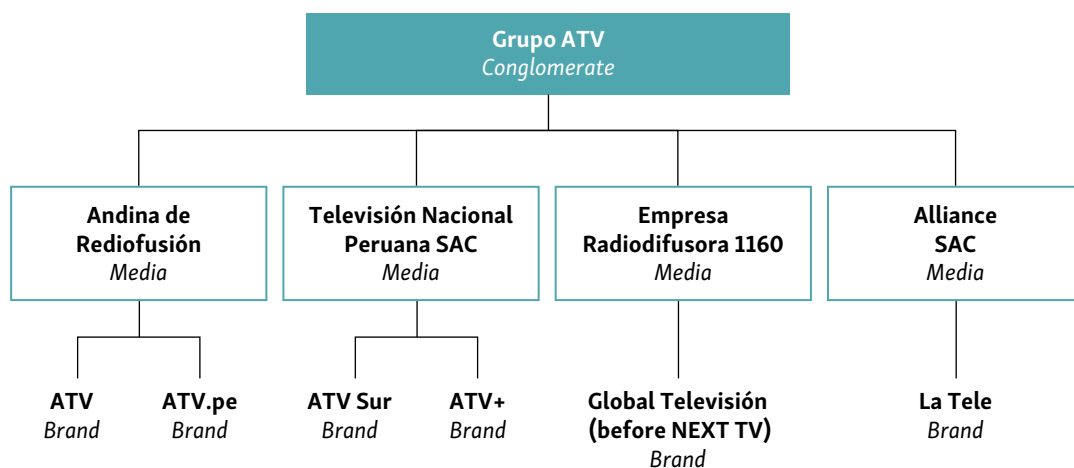


Figura 1. Medios y marcas involucrados en el conglomerado Grupo ATV

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

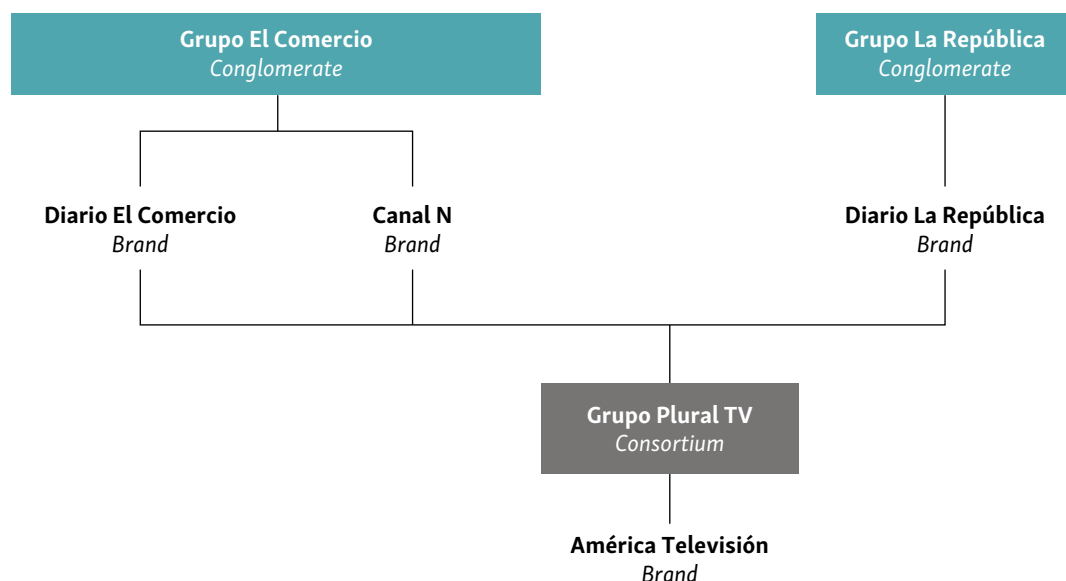


Figura 2. Estructura de la propiedad de América Televisión

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

This case opened the debate on the concentration of media ownership in Peru, due to the influence of Grupo El Comercio, which in addition to owning one of the most recognized television channels in the country (*América Televisión*), owns the newspapers *El Comercio*, *El Trome*, *Perú 21* and *Gestión*; the television channel *Canal N*, and recently acquired the majority of shares of Grupo Epena, which managed the newspapers *Correo*, *Ojo*, *Ajá* and *El Bocón*.

DISCUSSION

The objective of this article has been to systematize the methodological challenges encountered in mapping the media in Peru. The sources of information to represent the media ecosystem were an important aspect in the methodological discussion, highlighting the aspect of formality and regulation of the media. It is insufficient to consider formality and informality as mutually exclusive dynamics. It is necessary to delve deeper into the phenomenon of formal media with informal practices, its impact on the working conditions of journalists in the case of news media, and the media's responsibility for the content produced. While Zelizer (2013) points out the bias of the study of a very narrow journalistic world, it is also likely that the label of democratic journalism has assumed that it does not harbor informal practices that condition the journalists' work. Additionally, our study finds differences in the quality of the digital footprint, which refers to digital competencies that articulate different types of digital presence. This is why it is important to include sub-coding criteria that distinguish different forms of digital presence.

Categorizations are a fundamental part of the representation of a media ecosystem. The media's political organization imposes categorization through its support. Added to the phenomenon of digital convergence, this can produce distortions in the representation of a media system, creating the illusion of more media than actually exists. It is necessary to agree on criteria for media registries that consider the system's multimedia nature. In this regard, it is not only necessary to take into account new ways of practicing the profession (Schmidt, 2008, 2010), but also new ways of categorizing and understanding the media's nature. The theoretical universalism so permeated in the journalist's role (Hanitzsch et al., 2019) is also applicable to the consideration of the medium and its support, in line with the reflections raised by Waisbord (2009). Degrees of mediality could be tentatively formulated: high, moderate, and low, and indicators could be developed to integrate the support's preponderance for each of them. For example, in the case of radio, its tuning, or rating, in television. In the case of technological platforms, their traffic and reach could be considered. The integration of advertising participation and reach is not clear, especially in relation to digital media.

In that same vein, the business dynamics of the media entail a review of the categories related to the media's organizational hierarchy. It becomes necessary to distinguish between the figure of the media conglomerate or group, the media as a company, and the media brand with which the public recognizes it, and to observe them in a flexible manner. This is in the line pointed out by Hanitzsh and colleagues (2019) of journalism as an institution in discursive recreation, not only applied to news production but also to the business dynamics that surround them. At the methodological level, it becomes necessary to deepen and typify the articulation of such conceptual categories of media organization, a product of business dynamics.

For future research, it is necessary to understand the motivations behind the informal forms within the media and their impact on the conditions of journalistic practice. Likewise, it is required to deepen in the different digital competences, the valuation by the media, and the impact that digital presence has on the media. It is still pending to make the data collected visible and generate a collaborative and participatory dynamic that refines the information collected for this study.

FUNDING

Project title: Cartografía de medios informativos peruanos (Peruvian Media Mapping).

Funding years: 2019-2020.

Institution: Scientific Research Institute, Universidad de Lima.

Country: Peru.

REFERENCES

- Acevedo, J. (2016). Perú. Elecciones, medios de comunicación y redes sociales en el Perú (2016) (Peru. Elections, media, and social networks in Peru (2016)). *The Alliance for Networking Visual Culture*. Retrieved from <https://scalar.usc.edu/works/medios-y-elecciones/per>
- Acevedo, J. (2017). Los medios de comunicación como actores políticos. Cobertura de las elecciones presidenciales de 2016 en el Perú (The media as political actors. Coverage of the 2016 presidential elections in Peru). In D. Bruzone & M. Papaleo (Coords.), *Comunicación para la resistencia. Conceptos, tensiones y estrategias en el campo político de los medios* (Communication for resistance. Concepts, tensions and strategies in the political field of the media) (pp. 99-126). CLACSO. Retrieved from <http://biblioteca.clacso.edu.ar/clacso/gt/20181221054453/Comunicacion-para-la-resistencia.pdf>
- Becerra, M. & Mastrini, G. (2006). *Periodistas y magnates. Estructura y concentración de las industrias culturales en América Latina* (Journalists and tycoons. Structure and concentration of cultural industries in Latin America). Prometeo.
- Becerra, M. & Mastrini, G. (2009). *Los dueños de la palabra. Acceso, estructura y concentración de los medios en la América Latina del Siglo XXI* (The owners of the word. Access, structure, and concentration of the media in the Latin America of the 21st century). Prometeo.
- Becerra, M. & Mastrini, G. (2017). *La concentración infocomunicacional en América Latina (2000-2015): Nuevos medios y tecnologías, menos actores* (The infocommunication concentration in Latin America (2000-2015): New media and technologies, fewer actors). Universidad Nacional de Quilmes.
- Boczkowski, P. J. & Mitchelstein, E. (2019). The politics of contextualization in the contextualization of political communication research. *Political Communication*, 36(4), 676-679. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2019.1670903>
- Canales que transmiten TDT* (Channels that broadcast DTT). (n.d.) Televisión Digital Terrestre. Retrieved from http://www.tdt.pe/File/detalle_canales.pdf
- Castilla, O., Castro, J., & Yañez, L. (2016). Dueños de la noticia. Ojo Público, Lima. <https://duenosdelanoticia.ojo-publico.com/articulo/los-duenos-de-la-noticia/>
- Chanduvi, E. (2014). Media concentration threatens press freedom in Peru. *Latin American and Iberian Institute*. Retrieved from <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=15233&context=notisur>
- Decreto Supremo n° 006-2020-MTC. Decreto Supremo que modifica el numeral 15.1 del artículo 15 y el artículo 17 del Plan Maestro para la Implementación de la Televisión Digital Terrestre en el Perú, aprobado por Decreto Supremo No 017- 2010-MTC (Supreme Decree No. 006-2020-MTC. Supreme Decree that modifies numeral 15.1 of article 15 and article 17 of the Master Plan for the Implementation of Digital Terrestrial Television in Peru, approved by Supreme Decree No. 017-2010-MTC). (2020). Retrieved from https://cdn.www.gob.pe/uploads/document/file/514529/DS_006-2020-MTC.pdf
- Depósito legal*. (n.d.). Biblioteca Nacional del Perú. Retrieved from <https://www.bnp.gob.pe/servicios/deposito-legal/>
- Diario El Clarín Amazonas. (n.d.). *Home* (Facebook page). Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/ElClarínAmazonas.pe/>

- Estaciones autorizadas* (Authorized stations). (n.d.). Ministerio de Transportes y Comunicaciones. Retrieved from https://portal.mtc.gob.pe/comunicaciones/autorizaciones/radiodifusion/estaciones_autorizadas.html
- Freundt-Thurne, Ú., Pita, C., & Ampuero, M. J. (2013). *Mapping Digital Media: Peru*. Open Society Foundations. Retrieved from https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/mapping-digital-media-peru#publications_download
- Gargurevich, J. (2012). Los medios masivos de información en el Perú, 1980-2012 (Mass media in Peru, 1980-2012). *Conexión*, 1(1) 11-31. Retrieved from revistas.pucp.edu.pe/index.php/conexion/article/download/11555/12079
- Golding, P. (1977). Media professionalism in the Third World: The transfer of an ideology. In J. Curran, M. Gurevitch, & J. Woollacott (Eds.), *Mass communication and Society* (pp. 291-308). Edward Arnold.
- Gurevitch, M. & Blumler, J. G. (2004). State of the Art of Comparative Political Communication Research: Poised for Maturity. In F. Esser & B. Pfetsch (Eds.), *Comparing political communication: Theories, cases, and challenges* (pp. 325-343). : Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511606991>
- Hanitzsch, T., Hanusch, F., Mellado, C., Anikina, M., Berganza, R., Cangoz, I.,... & Virginia-Moreira, S. (2011). Mapping journalism cultures across nations: A comparative study of 18 countries. *Journalism Studies*, 12(3), 273-293. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2010.512502>
- Hanitzsch, T., Hanusch, F., Ramaprasad, J., & De Beer, A. (Eds.). (2019). *Worlds of Journalism: Journalistic Cultures Around the Globe*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press. <https://doi.org/10.7312/hani18642>
- Hanitzsch, T. & Vos, T. (2017). Journalistic Roles and the Struggle Over Institutional Identity: The Discursive Constitution of Journalism: Journalistic Roles and Institutional Identity. *Communication Theory*, 27(2), 115-135. <https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12112>
- Hanitzsch, T. & Vos, T. (2018). Journalism beyond democracy: A new look into journalistic roles in political and everyday life. *Journalism*, 19(2), 146-164. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884916673386>
- Impresos* (Printed media). (n.d.). Ojo Público. Retrieved from <http://peru.mom-rsf.org/es/medios/prensa/>
- Lainez, Z. (2014). Peru: the media tread carefully. *British Journalism Review*, 25(4), 56-60. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956474814562774>
- Lovatón, M. D. (2016). Estándares interamericanos sobre pluralidad de información y concentración de medios (Inter-American standards on plurality of information and media concentration). In *¿Puede acapararse la libertad? Libertad de expresión y concentración de medios en el Perú* (Can freedom be hoarded? Freedom of expression and media concentration in Peru) (pp. 95-139). Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú.
- Masterton, M. (1996). *Asian values in journalism*. Singapore: Asian Media Information and Communication Centre.

- Mellado, C. (2009). Periodismo en Latinoamérica: Revisión histórica y propuesta de un modelo de análisis (Latin American journalism: A review of five decades and a proposal for a model of analysis). *Comunicar*, 33, 193-201. <https://doi.org/10.3916/c33-2009-01-011>
- Nerone, J. (2013). The historical roots of the normative model of journalism. *Journalism*, 14(4), 446-458. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884912464177>
- Norris, P. (Ed.). (2009). *Public Sentinel: News media and governance reform*. The World Bank.
- Open Society Foundations. (2010, October 4). *Investigative journalists take on Peruvian corruption* (Press release). Retrieved from <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/press-releases/investigative-journalists-take-peruvian-corruption>
- Pintak, L. (2014). Islam, identity and professional values: A study of journalists in three Muslim-majority regions. *Journalism*, 15(4), 482-503. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884913490269>
- Protzel, J. (2014). Media Systems and Political Action in Peru. In M. A. Guerrero & M. Márquez-Ramírez (Eds.), *Media Systems and Communication Policies in Latin America* (pp. 82-99). Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137409058>
- Protzel, J. (1994). El paradigma del Príncipe: el líder, la Razón de Estado y los medios electrónicos (The Prince paradigm: the leader, the Reason of State, and the electronic media). *Contratexto*, 7, 21-29. <https://doi.org/10.26439/contratexto1994.n007.1951>
- Pulso TV Canal 1. (n.d.). *Home* (Facebook page). Retrieved from www.facebook.com/Pulso-TV-Canal-33-1135222749822542
- Radio Amistad 99.1 FM - Más fuerte que nunca. (n.d.) *Home* (Facebook page). Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/TuRadioAmistadFM>
- Radio Sepahua 100.5 FM - La señal que integra. (n.d.). *Home* (Facebook page). Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/radiosepahua>
- Santillán, J. (2017). Acerca de la concentración de medios (About media concentration). *Cultura*, 31, 141-156. <https://doi.org/10.24265/cultura.2017.v31.07>
- Schmidt, V. A. (2008). Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 11, 303-326. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.060606.135342>
- Schmidt, V. A. (2010). Taking ideas and discourse seriously: explaining change through discursive institutionalism as the fourth “new institutionalism”. *European Political Science Review: EPSR*, 2(1), 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S175577390999021X>
- Sinclair, J. (1999). *Latin American television: A global view*. Oxford University Press.
- Televisión en Perú (Television in Peru). (2020, February 8). *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from https://es.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Televisi%C3%B3n_en_Per%C3%BA&oldid=123573703
- Vivas, F. (2008). *En vivo y en directo. Una historia de la televisión peruana* (Live. A history of Peruvian television). Lima, Peru: Universidad de Lima.
- Waisbord, S. (2000). *Watchdog journalism in South America: News, accountability, and democracy*. Columbia University Press.
- Waisbord, S. (2009). Research directions for global journalism studies. Ideas from Latin America. *Journalism*, 10(3), 393-395. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884909102586>

- Waisbord, S. & Mellado, C. (2014). De-westernizing communication studies: A reassessment. *Communication Theory*, 24(4), 361-372. <https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12044>
- Worlds of Journalism. (2012). Field Manual (PDF). Retrieved from <https://worldsofjournalism.org/methodological-documentation/>
- Xu, X. (2005). *Demystifying Asian values in journalism*. Marshall Cavendish.
- Zelizer, B. (2004). *Taking journalism seriously: News and the academy*. Sage.
- Zelizer, B. (2013). On the shelf life of democracy in journalism scholarship. *Journalism*, 14(4), 459-473. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884912464179>

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

JESSICA RETIS, academic. Full Professor. Director of the master in Bilingual Journalism at the University of Arizona. B.A. in Communications (Universidad de Lima). Master in Latin American Studies (UNAM). Ph.D. in Contemporary Latin America (Universidad Complutense de Madrid). Research areas: international migration, Latin America, diasporas, transnational communities, bilingual journalism studies, Latino media in Europe, North America, and Asia. Co-author of *Latin Americans in London: Narratives of Migration, Relocation and Belonging* (Palgrave). Coeditor of *The Handbook of Diasporas, Media and Culture* (Wiley).

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0665-9837>

LILIAN KANASHIRO, professor at the Faculty of Communication of the Universidad de Lima. Degree in Communications (Universidad de Lima). Editor of *Contratexto* journal. Master in Political Science and Government (Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú). Ph.D. candidate in Semiotics and Communications (Pontificia Universidade Católica de São Paulo). Research areas: journalism, socio-semiotics, political communication. Author of *Debates presidenciales televisados en el Perú* (Televised presidential debates in Peru) (Universidad de Lima). Co-author of *El Perú y sus discursos* (Peru and its discourses) (Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú).

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0486-3105>

WENDY DOMENACK, professor at the Faculty of Communication of the Universidad de Lima. Degree in Communications (Universidad de Lima). Master in Business Communication Management (Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas). Specialization in Agency Journalism (EFE News Agency and Universidad Rey Juan Carlos). Ph.D. candidate in Sociology (Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos). Research areas: journalism, organizational communication. Consultant in strategic communication for the public and corporate sectors.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2575-5584>