

## Chapter 3

### “No more trash”

Citizens demand regulations and mass media that will improve their quality of life.

Public survey

October – November 2002

By Rosa María Alfaro Moreno

To all the volunteers of the Citizen Social Communication Inspectorship from all over the country, whose effort is giving birth to a renewed interest in making communication ethical and responsible in Peru.

To the people and institutions that are constantly offering us their support, encouragement and hopes for change.

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## II. CITIZEN INSPECTION AND REGULATORY BOARDS TO OFFSET MEDIA'S POWER AND DETERIORATION

“I don't like *Beto Ortiz' Show* because it only focuses on people's private lives. One's private life is no one else's business. Neither do I like those news broadcasts in which they only show blood and irrelevant issues that have nothing to do with the national situation. I am in favor of more objective programs on education and culture. I would also like to see more sports and other types of programs that help to promote values in Peru, and no more trash”. (Male, *UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL MAYOR DE SAN MARCOS* )

“They should try to be more objective. They should try to show reality and not to distort or manipulate information, and, by doing so, avoid a return to the *Fujimori and Montesinos' mafia*. Currently, television and newspapers are bribed. They still belong to the mafia. Direct attacks against the Government are the only things one sees or reads lately. Unfortunately, this is the reality we face. It's a shame that the only thing available is destructive criticism because it does not contribute to informing people. For example, today's news report that Eliane Karp has spent a large amount of money in her nationalization. Do people really care about that? What we want is that people be informed”. (Male, *Parque Universitario*).

“For me, TV shows like *Magaly* and *Gisela* are the worst. Some TV shows are dedicated to entertain people with superfluous things.

They take people out of reality and make them think that what they see is what real life is about, completely neglecting the real present and future of Peru. People get lost. We should advocate TV shows that not only help us to develop an awareness of the current situation, but also to look for ways of developing our country” (Male, *UNMSM*).

*Magali* is a TV show that I don't like. It invades other people's lives and has no cultural benefits, especially for children. Another TV show that I don't want the children to watch is *Goku*. It is far too aggressive and children like to imitate the character, which is not good. The *Hilda Huracan's* programs shouldn't be on. Although they are broadcast after 10 p.m., some children are still alone doing their homework, or are still awake and exposed to these shows. *Risas y Salsa (Laugh and Sauce)* is another aggressive show that uses obscene language that children tend to use. There are other programs I don't want children to see: *Chola Jacinta*, from *la Paisana Jacinta*, which is another silly show. *El Chavo (name given to a street orphan boy)*, which has been broadcast for several years now, is very silly too. (Female, *Gran Parque de Lima*)

“The worst on TV is the acceptance of homosexuals. In radio programs, opinion shows are the worst; the publication of information that is not true in newspapers and mainly on TV. The very worst are adult programs like the ones presented on Channel 5. What example are we giving to today's youth? There is a lot of soap operas for children, that are the worst of the worst. They should broadcast cultural shows that encourage young people to be better human beings. (Female, *Parque Universitario*)

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**Introduction:**

## **Citizen indignation and desire for change**

For the Citizen Social Communication Inspectorship, collecting public opinion on audiovisual media is an act of democratic and communicative responsibility. It is a response to an ethical and humanistic willingness that takes into account and listens to the parties involved. To those firms that measure audience using different quantification methods, the citizen is just a number that makes up "rating". Rating is a helpful tool used by media so they can negotiate their advertising profits. Based on these data, most media legitimate, change or simply cancel not only programs but also hosts and personalities according to ratings. This famous and much discredited "rating" is a percentage reflecting audience preference based on the amount of viewers tuned in to such and such channel or radio station, regardless of whether or not they are paying attention or feel rejection; it is just the result of an apathetic attitude. It is clear that the audience has neither voice nor vote. They don't have an opinion; they are absent; they are out of the communication flow. They are not considered as significant or influential, not even as a source of feedback. The general impression is that citizens do not deserve to be treated as interlocutors for communication. Neither dialog nor reciprocal growth exists between media and audience. Audiences are not appreciated as citizens with rights in the communication and information field. Their respect and opinion should be considered important in the development of programming.

Ratings are measured using an electronic system connecting only 400 TV sets in the city of Lima, without considering the provinces and possible technical failures. Another method is surveys. Many of them are made over the telephone in order to minimize costs. This method is not necessarily representative and reliable since 400 people are always interviewed in Lima. In both systems, the satisfaction level of the audience is totally ignored as well as the credibility and utility of what is shown. It is even impossible to know how much people are attracted by a program, a

radio station or TV channel. Public criticism is unimportant; the audience has been reduced to the consumer level. The number of people watching or listening is more important than approval ratings.

Contrary to the poor and somewhat perverse “rating” system, the survey conducted as an inspectorship of sorts, constitutes a more complex approach to the relationship between media and consumers. The idea is to gather consumer practices, particularly opinions, judgment, satisfaction, benefits and demands and suggestions. This way, the citizen becomes a person with the power to express, influence and demand changes concerning mass media. He or she becomes the most important agent within the communication process.

It is an accepted fact that the public has opinions and in many cases, very radical ones. As noted earlier, the media is often rejected based upon a sensitivity developed by the individual’s personal experiences and his or her ability to compare different media past and present. All this with a backdrop of nefarious episodes of corruption that occurred previously in the country. They also have a point of view as to the role the media should play in the country. The irony being that these same much criticized media has allowed the public to see what was behind the images and headings. Curiously, TV and “*chicha*” (yellow) newspapers are important issues to be dealt with and judged on their own merit. But since they allowed themselves to push the limits of good taste, crossing over the boundaries of what is acceptable and what is not, they gave way to a movement that has allowed the public to develop an ethical sense about what is good and what is bad. It is probable that in less critical times there was less criticism. So, in that sense, we can say that progress has been made. The “*vladivideos*” have helped to overcome the shadow of secrecy to find light and liberation away from the moral decay they so

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\* Translator’s Note: the term is derived from the name “Vladimiro” and makes reference to the videos he recorded.

abhorre. Such decay has made them more demanding than before although there is still a lot to be done, especially when it comes to communication rights that assist in both communication and information. The call for “no more trash” is a call for change. It is now a part of all of us and we are using factual and argumentative issues rather than just insults. There is the general hope that the media would become more objective and “teach” us “how to achieve self development”. “TV shows that help us to develop our minds are required”, “we want people to be informed”; “young people need to receive more support that will encourage their development and progress. Education and culture must be promoted with an emphasis on national interest. “We don’t want the *Fujimori and Montesinos*’ mafia to return”.

For these reasons, they vigorously reject media’s lack of respect for privacy, specially the morbid exhibitionism that harms both presenters and the audience. The main characters, especially *Magali* and *Beto Ortiz* are singled out although *Jaime Bayli* is also named. Both violence and aggression are also questioned, mainly when children are involved. This is where *GOKU* comes into play. Homosexuality is depicted in such a way that even the most liberal minded is inspired to homophobic sentiments. The comedy shows on several TV stations are twisted models of transsexual behavior and obscenity. The utilization of women as sex objects on TV or in print is also disturbing. There is also much criticism about news broadcasts and the tendency to hide or alter the truth. They tend to present a negative view of the country denying us a true insight into the reality of Peru, of what it really is and what “it can one day become”. There is also an evident rejection of the personalization of human misery diminishing its social importance and urgency. Based on these conclusions, there is an obvious need to reestablish values in our country as well as developing objectivity in the media that will help us to think more clearly and promote a sense of cultural development and growth in the country. Its ethical messages must be heard in order to

generate change. With these in mind, it is obvious to assume that the people are aware of the importance of the media and its capacity to influence. This means that people not only have the right to express their thoughts and opinions but also to be aware of communication projects. Many are eager to introduce topics of public interest and actively participate in the presentation, thus becoming visible and involved citizens.

In the course of developing this report we have made use of several public surveys done over the past two years. In some cases we have extracted answers and opinions when pertinent to the subject matter<sup>1</sup>. We have specially taken into consideration data that came out of the Public Campaign and Citizen Survey entitled “You have the control”, addressed to promote citizens debate on the role of the media, basically TV and Radio, and to gather proposals on methods and participation initiatives for the audiences to counterweight the media’s power and its aims. The most recent one took place between the months of October and November 2002.

The campaign consisted of two main activities. The first, entailed the creation of several of Citizens Caravans<sup>2</sup> in the streets and plazas. These took place in the cities of Lima, Arequipa, Cuzco and Trujillo. Thousands of people participated through information modules, educational dramatizations, and other participation mechanisms that allowed the people to select those methods that best suited their communication styles. The activities were carried out in places where people tend to gather, like *Parque Universitario* in Lima or *Plaza de Armas* in Trujillo and Cuzco, or *Plaza Ramón Castilla* in Arequipa, also in Universities in Lima, achieving a spontaneous and communicative interaction with the people.

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<sup>1</sup> “Los Niños Te Ven” (November 2001) presented in Lima and Triviño; Fem Tv (October, 2002.) presented in Puno, Cuzco, Trujillo, Arequipa and Lima.

<sup>2</sup> Public activities having as objective to inform, raise awareness, gather proposals and promote the community debates on public interest topics, not available for most people. Campaigns use ludic and interactive strategies to motivate participation. Annex I specifies in detail the work methodology.



It promoted the direct participation of people who generally have no access to means of self expression, and much less for debating. The expressions and points of view here presented are excerpts from interviews to citizens of Lima, who participated in activities such as *rajecabinas* (a large, brightly colored booth where people express their feelings without being heard or seen), *grafichangas* (a sort of blackboard for free expression), and *macroánforas* (ballot box where people deposit cards with proposals and suggestions). These activities became an instance of community participation where a total number of 9,077 people in Lima alone.

A second activity, called “Citizen Referendum”, was also conducted. It consisted in encouraging the public to express their opinions on a number of things related to the media. The information was collected by volunteers working for the Citizen Communication Inspectorship. The methodology used for these surveys is different from that used in the surveys done by sampling. The Inspectorship designs a questionnaire for the public to be answered on an individual basis or in dialog with family members. 3,135 people from the cities of Arequipa, Cuzco, Lima and Trujillo participated. They were contacted through the Citizen’s Inspectorship volunteers or our web page. Housewives, students, professionals, teachers, laborers, teenagers, and children all had the opportunity to express themselves during the campaign, this being the third organized by the Citizen’s Inspectorship on the national scene. This effort allowed us to combine the percentage data of many of the citizens interviewed based by the survey mechanism with the life testimonies, where the citizen was free to express his or her own opinions and suggestions. All together we got the opinions and requests of 12,212 people. Although they are not representative from the statistical point of view, the difference between those interviewed by our survey and the famous 400 from the rating is outstanding. Still, basically, the difference

lies in the very different ways of approaching and dialoging with the community adopted by each of the two methods.

It is worth making clear that the opinions given by the people in the “*rajecabinas*” have been transcribed textually from the recordings. Our only parameter to guide us was an open question about what was good and bad about the media, without the help of optional responses provided by us. That way, the people were completely free to say what they wanted. The more representative answers, indicating a general consensus, were chosen, especially those that were carefully formulated, giving us a general picture of Lima’s feelings concerning the media. On the whole, we can be assured that the spirit of criticism and discontent is also generalized. Compared to other tools or activities, this one allows us to go deep into the criteria and reasons that feed the public’s anger, and shows people’s sensitivity naturally and vigorously expressed. This is highly meaningful data since it deals with proximity to the people’s experiences, as far as any qualitative investigation allows. On the other hand, polls are more representative for both statistics and population data, especially nation wide polls. Surveys, due to their quantity, represent more numeric indications than statistical ones as far as the thoughts and feelings of citizens about the media is concerned.

For the campaign “You have the Control” we enjoyed the collaboration of the Private *University Antenor Orrego* in Trujillo, *University San Antonio Abad* in Cuzco, *Catholic University of Santa María* in Arequipa, *Pontificia Universidad Católica de Perú* in Lima, and *Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos*. Likewise, partner institutions of the Citizen Inspectorship as well as other universities joined the initiative. This activity has been made possible thanks to the cooperation of the British Council, an institution that has given support to the Citizen Inspectorship and other efforts of the community with the

purpose of strengthening democracy in Peru. We want to thank particularly all the volunteers, many of them students and professionals.

**I. CRITICISM OF THE MEDIA:  
NO MORE TRASH! CHANGE IS URGENTLY NEEDED!**

It is true that the people are media consumers, specially TV. Earlier studies indicate, for instance, that children and teenagers are in front of the TV set 4 hours per day<sup>3</sup>. Adult viewing time varies. Some watch few hours of TV, one or two hours a day or only on weekends. But there are some cases in which the people have the TV set turned on all day long, as if it were a Radio. This means the 'others' world is present in his or her daily life and, at least in the background, it rests symbolically important as a source of information. Otherwise people would be isolated from public activities. Radio is also a highly consumed media, providing music for young people and news for mature people. On the other hand young people from high society levels are moving out to newer technologies, discarding TV and the printed press, but getting in touch again with the radio through the computer screen<sup>4</sup>. Fewer people read newspapers, although the cheapest ones are becoming more popular. These include both the yellow and popular tabloids that have reappeared lately. Naturally, there is a part of the population that only reads the newspaper headlines at kiosks. In other words all media play a substantial part in Peruvian life, one way or another. Through the media the people receive entertainment, understand reality, and their political and cultural sensitivities takes root. It is used to define their positions towards ethics, aesthetics, and politics. The country and the world pass before their eyes and ears, sometimes frightening or confusing them, creating images of

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<sup>3</sup> "Los Niños Te Ven, ¿and what do they see?. A violent television that entertains and disappoints . Several authors. CitIzen Social Communication Inspectorship -Unicef- National Commission for the protection of Children and Adolescents's rights. Lima, May 2,002. Pages 104-105, 127-128 and 146.

<sup>4</sup> Conclusion reached from field work carried out by the students of the School of Communication of the University of Lima during the course *Medios y Públicos [Media and Audiences]* taught by the author of this text. September – December 2002

themselves and others. Representations and values start a dialog with their personal experiences gradually shaping what we know as public opinion. It is always related to the news, but goes beyond it. There is, therefore, no idea or thought that has not been previously confronted against the media.

Media consumers may become accustomed to what is presented to them but it doesn't necessarily mean that they have to be in agreement with what is offered, specially, in this age of change, uncertain future and huge disappointment. Even if media criticism should be left to the public alone (analysts and experts in the field must also participate), nevertheless, it is important that audiences speak their mind in order to be accepted and appreciated as real spokespeople. We need to know whether that famous balance between supply and demand really exists. If consumers are dissatisfied with what the media offers, they must be able to speak out to bear some influence over that which is offered to them. The idea is to let the public evaluate the media in an attempt to overcome the 'rating' dogma.

## **GENERAL DISCONTENT:**

### **WHAT IS BAD ABOUT TV AND OTHER MEDIA**

Dissatisfaction with TV is widespread and emphatic, as we will clearly see. According to the opinions recorded at the booths, where people weren't identified or heard, TV in general is bad, with some exceptions. Others criticize specific programs and genres: news, comedy, soap operas and shows among others, sometimes including specific celebrities or well known figures. According to some, the media has implied loosing ground in the development of the country and its people. It's as simple as that. Education is ignored on TV, which hinders both progress and development. This is something worry about. The information received

does not inspire thought. In order to grow as a nation, the media must change, because no transformation within the country is possible without media change. But if education implies a bad influence, this will not only harm and delay cultural growth it also will encourage violence and gossip, making progress impossible.

Some people link the poor quality of what is presented on TV with corruption, as if all of it were part of a unique phenomenon. This intuitive insight associates the deterioration of the country with all forms of corruption still unpunished. And television is considered one of its principal precursors. Statements that would scare some traditional sociologists because it seems that both media and society are in effect considered part of the same phenomenon of collective waste. The influence is mutual.

The way in which the sexual content is dealt with, worries many people. In some cases from a moralist point of view and in others from a humanistic one. Rejection of the way in which the female body is manifest. They think it disturbs the sexual development of children. They also find very disturbing the fact that the women who get most attention and become successful TV and media stars are the 'vedette' types or cheer gossips and not women who struggle and work hard to make something out of themselves. They interpret the over exposure of homosexuality as a signal that says "Something is going wrong". Even if homosexuals are being, the reasons behind for their sudden emergence are unclear. There is a general concern that perhaps the importance given to homosexuals may harm children. They disapprove of the fact that what should be a private issue becomes public with the only purpose of achieving success on TV. It is as if, for lack of anything better, they (the media) create new myths and ethical and cultural confusion for the only sake of profit. All these things explain in part the virulence of the criticism: It stems from a set of uncertainties mixed with feelings of indignation.

No TV channel or personality spares criticism. In their opinion they could cause such an enormous amount of damage that that they can even destroy whole families (influence of *Magali TV*). They can set back development or create an environment conducive to delinquency. They make a conscientious effort to convey what they find wrong but still, the media, like Pontius Pilate, wash their hands of such accusations and deny it.

We can interpret it to mean that, according to them (the public) such is the TV we have and it got its bad image without their direct intervention. Criticism also extends to some newspapers and radio stations. And whether the public would prefer a different television landscape or not, it doesn't matter: anyway they'll have to watch it as watching TV is part of everyday life and family gatherings. This seems to mean that, in real terms, rating is based on keeping dislike and doubt hidden, aware (as all media are) that the audiovisual language is the widest of all extant languages. Images have become the center piece for legitimizing values, dialogs and sensitivities. Anger cohabitates, paradoxically, with a sense of impotence. Let's take a look at the following statements:

“Currently, there is nothing good on TV. There's nothing in Peru, there is nothing good on either private or public channels” (Male, *Parque Universitario*)

“My opinion is that Peruvian TV is trashy. There are no educational or informative programs. The educational programs for children are trash. One may ask “where is education”, but what is the point of talking about education if, in this country no one acts on behalf of education, so what can we expect from TV? The only station that is worth anything is Channel 7 because at least they show some culture. There are also Channels 2, 3l, and 4. The cartoons show violence and sexuality and as if that wasn't enough, they aren't

even Peruvian cartoons. Why broadcast Peruvian television at all? Just to broadcast International television? So go ahead and watch Powerpuff Girls. I hope my suggestions are taken into account". (Female, *UNMSM*)

All the TV channels are full of trash. I'm sick and tired of *Magali*, *Gisela*, *Beto Ortiz*; I'm tired of *Risas de América (Latin American Laughs)*; tired of *Jaime Baily* and fed up with soap operas; there are too few news reels and few cultural and sports programs. I'm tired of the gossiping, I'm tired of the threats and aggression on talk shows. I'd prefer more culture on TV, more news, and sports for children. I'm tired of watching pansies that are a bad influence for children. Same problem with Radio, they only play music, few news stations, etc. On Channel 4 they only show soap operas, we need fewer soap operas and more sports. For instance, on Channel 2 they should present more news, more educational programs. Channel 5 is not good any more, that is the worst station. The worst channels are: 2, 4 and 5. Channel 9 *Magali TV*. I'm tired of watching homosexuals. (Male, *Parque Universitario*)

"First of all, TV, radio and newspapers delay the development of our country. That is a matter of fact. If we want to improve in culture, education, and anything worthwhile we have to make radical changes in the media. One important issue is that some good programs are broadcast late at night when children and young people are not able to watch them, and the worst TV programs are broadcast in the morning hours. The media should be careful with programs that have sexual content, because we don't know what a child might think if he sees nudes and listens to the slang they speak. The child might think that all Peru is like that, which is not true, we are better than that. Some programs can delay our development, and in order for Peru to grow, a change is required within the media. Otherwise we will lag behind because bad media

influence can turn people into thieves or gangsters. Channels should promote variety and at the same time be specialized. For instance one channel for porn, one channel for children, one cultural channel, etc. (Male, *Parque Kennedy*)

“At the top of the list for worst program is the *Magaly Medina* show, because it even destroys families. And the best... well, I'd rather continue with the worst: that bloke, *Beto Ortiz*, both he and Magaly are made for each other. Although they haven't harmed me, they are the worst of the worst. That's it, thanks”. (Female, *Parque Universitario*).

“For me, soap operas are the worst because they threaten the values of both men and women. A lot of violence, corruption, and misinformation. Violent movies teach nothing. What we need are more documentaries, educational and scientific programs so that parents can raise children properly. That's it. (Male, *Gran Parque de Lima*)

“*Medio día de Janet (Janet's Noon)* is a TV show that shows far too offensive material for a noon day show. In my opinion that *Magali* show is the second worst in Peru. It is a TV show that shouldn't be aired at noon and she is not the appropriate person to host a noon show. Besides, TV ought to change and present educational programs. They should restrict certain programs for certain hours, for instance on channel 13 *Latin Lover* is being aired at an hour when it is possible that children are around. Besides, these programs incite people's morbid feelings.” (Female, *Gran Parque de Lima*)

“I would like the *Magali* show to disappear from the face of the earth. The same goes for *Laura Bozzo*, *Vladimiro* and all of its gang, and the entire Judicial power. Well that's all I have to say”. (Female, *UNMSM*)



“Currently, television and newspapers are bought off. They still belong to the mafia, and the only information is that which criticizes openly the government. That is the real situation. It is a shame that the only things to see and hear are destructive criticisms, criticisms that are not contributing to the public’s information”. (Male, *Parque Universitario*).

“I think that programs on Channel 4 are way too offensive and harmful for people because they are disguising our real problems with trivial TV shows. When I talk about trivial TV shows I refer to foreign soap operas, most of them Mexican soap operas, which might be harmful for viewers. I think that channel 4 should change its programs in order to educate people. Considering that a big part of our population has no access to higher education, TV should take advantage of its position to help better educate the masses. That’s it. (Female, *Gran Parque de Lima*)”

“I would cancel all soap operas that do not benefit people which, regrettably, are aired when kids are at home. If, after finishing homework they want to watch any good TV program, suitable for their ages, they can’t because the soap opera is on. Also when children are watching any program they go ahead and broadcast commercials with adult content. Although ‘sex is a positive activity and part of human behavior’ as they say, there is no reason for children to watch those commercials”. (Female, *Parque Kennedy*)

I don’t like *Risas de América* because I think that kind of program makes our people stupid. It has no real content and is based solely on nudity. This kind of TV show teaches nothing. (Female, *Gran Parque de Lima*)

The worst shows are: those that convey anti-values such as the *Magali* show, all those people who have deceived the audience as *Beto Ortiz* plus all TV programs showing violence such as *Revenge*

or Death. These programs show the actual state of our TV. (Male, UNMSM)

In the survey “Women, Advertising and Soap Operas” (the context was the “FEM-TV” awards, 2,060 people from several Peruvian cities (Trujillo, Puno, Cuzco, Arequipa and Lima), were asked about their feelings regarding public TV broadcasting. The dissatisfaction expressed is quite meaningful and worrisome, much more so if we consider the fact that television is the most consumed mass media. There are coincidences among the aforementioned testimonies and these results. We could be facing a paradox, because the preferred media is found at the same time the most disappointing. We are facing a huge gap between what is being consumed and what is really satisfying. This is not based on the perception of a few but rather on that of a great many people in this country.

Are you happy with public Peruvian television broadcasting?		
Yes	494	24.00%
No	1,560	75.74%
No answer/ No comment	6	0.3%
Total	2,060	494

Fem TV- October – November 2002

When asked if TV should improve its programming, obviously, the percentage rose even more, supporting the previous statistic. This would indicate that people expect something better and feel it is possible to achieve it. The sense of progress is associated to improvement and should not therefore be left to the whim of its owners. Television should not remain as it is by justifying itself as an entertainment vehicle. There is a small fraction that doesn't care to answer or doesn't have a clear

opinion and another even smaller group that has no interest in changing the status quo.

Do you think that TV stations have an obligation to improve their programs?		
Yes	1,902	92.3%
No	51	2.5%
No answer / No comments	107	5.2%
Totals	2,060	100.0%

#### Fem TV- October – November 2002

Following the same procedure, people were asked about the need to make changes in the media, now as part of the campaign “You have the Control”. The question is now wider and doesn’t make particular reference to specific programs but rather to what people get out of it, not only from television but from all media. Based on percentages, there is an obvious desire for change. There is a clear demand for improvement within the media.

Do you think that the Peruvian media needs changes ?		
Yes	2,806	89.5%
No	163	5.2%
No answer/ No comments	166	5.3%
Total	3,135	100.0%

#### “You have the Control”. Survey. October – November 2002

This need has been around for several years and, when dealing with TV, the general feeling that changes are required increases slightly. Although when considering all media as a whole TV plays a major role, when focused on TV, people’s concerns increase. Back in 2001 changes were required in almost 100 percent of the cases. The fact that these data was

gathered through a survey means it is technically representative of the opinions of the Limean population. The demand for a change in TV is almost total and unanimous.

Do you think that the Peruvian media needs changes ?	
Yes	99.2%
No	0.8%
Totals	100.0%

Lima Survey, October 2001

In spite all, it was often thought that the media could change and improve their product. This was said, though, in 2001, on a nationwide level. Currently, a lack of credibility surrounds the media, specially TV and the gutter press. Yet, it is clear that for the last two years the criticism has not diminished and that the media are neither accepting responsibility nor improving. Their arrogance is so overwhelming that, despite the fact that their audiences have been questioning them, they still consider themselves as “communication leaders”. This claim, if left to the consumer, would read “mediocrity leaders”. Politicians should be sensitive to this kind of public resistance since their power comes from the communities votes and opinions. Nevertheless, it doesn’t always work that way. Many of them prefer to side with the media rather than take the chance on having the media go against them.

Do you think the media can change and improve their products?	
Yes	90.5%
No	8.9%
No answer/ No comments	0.1
Totals	100.0%

## National Survey, February 2001

As far as the citizenry, who represent the media's audience, is concerned, almost everything is wrong. This is the general consensus taken from those who participated in the citizen caravans, surveys and polls, as well as in oral testimonies. The main criticism, the most manifest issue is directed against entertainment from a moral point of view, specially when dealing with sexuality, violence and human relationships. The following chart contains some data to be considered regarding the media.

What is the worst thing one can find on TV, radio and newspapers?	Number	%
Pornography, violence, soap operas, gossiping	137	43,2
Poor informative programs	46	14,5
Homosexuals, strippers	38	12,0
Everything is bad	23	7,3
Manipulated news	20	6,3
Other responses	24	7,6
No response	29	9,1
Total	317	100,0

“You have the Control”. Citizen Groups at Lima: *Rajecabina*.

October – November 2003

### **THE SAME AS OR WORSE THAN THE LAST DECADE IN POLITICAL INFORMATION**

In the following questions from the survey “You have the Control” the evaluating capacity of people was encouraged. They were expected to compare the past with the present. At first sight, the survey seems to show that often people find that things are the same as before, that there

are no Improvements and that despite the change in Administrations, things have been impervious to political change. Secondly, some say that they are worse than before. And just a 25.45 percent says that they have improved. Nevertheless, the last group appears to feel, based on previous answers, that morality has deteriorated. The dissatisfaction of the majority is obvious. Even though we are dealing with what we can call our collective political memory, something not particularly developed in this country, it was nor surprising that the answers dealt more with the present as the basis for the critical criteria, they are non the less interesting and lead to clear present criticism of the media industry.

Make an evaluation of the current media quality compared to prior years				
Evaluated Aspects	Has improved	Has worsened	Same as before	No answer / No comments
Independence or integrity	38.1	23.8	37,0	1.3
Allows participation	28.7	25.9	43.4	2.0
Truthfulness	19.3	31.8	47.2	1.7
Better information	28.4	24.2	45.9	1.4
Gives people the opportunity to think	20.0	29.6	48.1	2.4
Promotes quality debates	22.3	29.3	46.6	1.8
Provides useful everyday information	21.4	31.6	44.8	2.1
Average	25.45	28.02	44.71	1.81

Survey "You have the Control". October – November 2002.

3,135 participants

### **SAME AS BEFORE**

The main tendency supports the theory that as far as information is concerned, the media at the same level as before. According to the majority, there have not been any meaningful changes within the journalistic environment, pointing to a certain generalized deception in

their expectations. This analysis adheres to the overwhelming demand to improve the quality of the media. If we combine these two tendencies we could state that despite the neutrality of the statement, there seems to be a feeling of distrust when stating that there have been no changes in the media, at least no meaningful changes. This would be more serious when dealing with topics such as: making people think; expressing truth; promoting quality debates; depth of information; and providing useful information; even participation. On the other hand, the independence of the media appears to show a positive percentage. In fact there is more divergence in today's opinions.

**MEDIA HAVE IMPROVED.** Independence of several media is one of the aspects they improved. This means that there is good use of the term Freedom of speech adhering to the principles of democratization. This means that some of them have made improvements and some others haven't. Also, citizen participation and depth of information improved but far too distant from the first one already mentioned. Autonomy, participation and investigative journalism would be some points mentioned by people participating in the survey, as signs of improvement. Only in the case of informative independence were there fewer skeptics. Certainly, it is true that there are new informative proposals, less outrageous, and more impartial, in both press and TV.

**MEDIA HAVE WORSENEDED.** On the other hand, regarding expressing the truth and providing useful information they have worsened. This was followed by the opinion that people are not either given the opportunity to think or promote quality debates. These are informative dysfunctions that must change. Journalistic projects would no be faithful to the truth, and helpful for the ordinary citizen. They would not be helping the citizen to think, probably because of the descriptive and detailed tone of news. A deliberate culture, if once ever existed, would have crumbled, being confused by destructive fights or conflicts. This is supported by some

previous testimonials and means that the basis for truth and dialog is less respected among Peruvians. Also, citizens would not benefit from the broadcast information. This vital tendency points to interesting data about the informative weakness of our media. It does not necessarily support a perverse willingness in certain cases, although it does in others, but rather reflects or depicts the weaknesses of our journalism as a whole.

Clearly, if we combine these 3 evaluations, we can conclude that the greatest weakness in information produced by current media would be in inspiring people to think, expressing the truth, promoting quality debates, examining information, and providing useful information for the people to apply to their daily lives. It is possible that these results mainly deal with TV, because it is highly more consumed than other media, although the general opinion is addressed to all communication media. Nevertheless, certain progress can be perceived, supposedly among certain media, regarding achieved independence, participation and deep analysis of information. There is no a highly meaningful and recognizable tendency to improve or innovate information quality. In general, our informative journalism is not considered as advanced and is less supportive of the country, democracy and people.

## **AESTHETIC AND ETHICAL DETERIORATION IN ENTERTAINMENT AND CULTURE**

Statements previously presented, and confirmed in the following testimonials reflect the general discontent concerning the entertainment and culture offered, especially on TV and the yellow press. People allegedly tag culture as knowledge that leads to progress and ethics, and governs values and behaviors, as related aspects for a concept. Tiredness and moral disgust are easily perceived. But signals of esthetical discontent are also perceived by emphasizing words like “appalling”, “garbage”, and “obscenity”. In the academic field we usually establish differences between knowledge, ethics



and aesthetics. For common citizens, these concepts are part of multifaceted moral detriment. In their statements the need for knowledge is perceived and instead of receiving it they experience a throwback of humanity, morality and progress. Peoples' health, ethics and culture are forged by entertainment and therefore they require quality and extreme care. There are also requests for positive messages that may contribute to the progress of both country and people; all of this to the media's concern as a part of their responsibility.

"I consider that current TV programs are not allowing the cultural development of the country. Most TV stations are broadcasting trashy programs. For instance, *Risas en America* is appalling" (Male, *Parque Kennedy*)

*Risas en América* is a monstrosity. It is an insult to one's intelligence... (Male, *Parque Kennedy*)

"For me, soap operas are the worst, because they threaten the values of both men and women. There is a lot of violence, corruption, and misinformation. Violent movies teach nothing. We need more documentals and educational and scientific programs so parents can raise children properly, that's it. (Male, *Gran Parque de Lima*)

"My personal opinion as a mother is that there should be a person in charge of education and people's needs, because both laugh and health are good for people" (Female, *Parque Universitario*)

The results from this survey are even more negative than the previous one. 44.5 percent of the population thinks that entertainment media have worsened, 35.2 percent feel that they are the same as before and a fifth of people (19.2 percent) believe they have improved in entertainment.

The general consensus of people is that entertainment, followed by culture got worse.

As it has already been stated, both instances are inseparable as far as people are concerned. But within the world of mass media and sometimes even within the intellectual world, differences have been made. The first one is found in the field of relaxation, parties, and humorous shows, allowing ethical and aesthetic permissiveness. There is a mindset of doing whatever to catch people's attention, excitement and laughs, all for the profit of show business. But on the other hand, art, intellectual environment, and history are placed in culture, combining esthetical refinement and rational and intellectual speeches of the higher educated people. Entertainment is supposed to be available to everybody, and considered more profitable. Culture is only for refined tastes, and for people who would not expect an answer. Nevertheless, in one way or another, the respondents have doubts about this separation. So, entertainment is also culture, through which we can enjoy forms and shapes, narrations, images, communicative relationships, movement and individuals and collective pleasure. What we have here is several ways to produce culture. This necessarily leads us to be concerned about the so questioned entertainment because this also means ethical and the esthetic acquirement and legitimacy. The lack of cultural proposals for entertainment in the country is preoccupying, and TV is not even aware of that.

It is clear that there were problems regarding entertainment during the last two years. Showgirls and/or strippers and unpolished comedy shows arose. Journalists who assumed the role of the newest and boldest clowns became masters of mockery, laugh and effrontery. They even mixed political objectives with supposed skills in the field of moral boldness and information, they call fun. They sometimes dirtied the public image of others. Some programs based their popularity on promoting irrational

situations on the edge of human behavior. Entertainment became mere unpolished sexual incitation, a depredation of social relationships and the degradation of human misery. Some programs used people to get an applause, exciting their narcissist ego and used audiences for profit. People are aware of that and that is why entertainment has gotten worse, although 19.2 percent support this kind of entertainment, which is preoccupying. Cultural programs are in better shape probably thanks to the efforts of the public broadcasting channel. But the general discontent is clear. Probably broadcasting a series of programs about theater, movies, literature and history by *Television Nacional del Perú (TNP)* in the so-called cultural space could have influenced people's answers. Unfortunately, in the last months, *TNP* cancelled several educational programs and included some poor educational and cultural programs. The importance given to programs that promote national tourism is remarkable, as shown below.

Evaluate the current quality of media as opposed to previous years regarding:				
	Have improved	Have worsened	Are the same as before	No Answer No Comments
Entertainment programs	19.2	44.5	35.2	1.1
Cultural programs	27.0	31.0	39.6	2.4
Average				

“You have the Control”. October – November 2002 3.135 participants

### **Then, what is good?**

General opinion is critical and reveals discontent, specially with respect to information, entertainment and culture. But not everything is lost; there

are some proposals that can be highlighted. Certain personalities, programs and specific media are emphasized. A certain coherence can be observed in the previous statements, even though the result is different and even contrary to what was questioned. It is interesting to see that in such cases there is both learning and entertainment, two aspects generally seen as incompatible in TV. People are not choosing cultural or educational boredom, but are rather asking for a fusion between entertainment and education.

There are those who have contributed to the creation of other communication paradigms through which media can be judged. These are useful for people to identify new notions or characteristics as the models against which to compare or contrast programs. At the same time, they create hope based on viability, because it is possible to create a communication more closely related to people's values. Thus, expectations are not in the realm of dreams. It is not only important that they are well evaluated; these offers have arisen the spirit of criticism, which is highly important for right awareness.

The public TV channel and its cultural programs are specially highlighted, as well as "*El Comercio*" newspaper. Some people have also mentioned cable TV programs —such as those of the *Discovery Channel*—, that is to say, foreign products. Some personalities, such as journalist César Hildebrandt, Giacosa, and particular programs related to tourism, ecology and Peruvian customs are also mentioned. The humoristic contribution of "*24 Minutos*" is also recognized and appreciated. The self-called leading programs of Peruvian television, such as *Mil Oficios (A Thousand Jobs)*, are not mentioned. Some suggest that the *Belmont* show is on a different level, although others criticize it. Finally, still other programs are mentioned in the following statements:

“I think that *Cinescape* is a good program because it shows good previews of the seventh art. I like “*24 Minutos*” because it is good humor. With respect to *América* TV station, *Hildebrant* is the best one; there are some good movies. That’s it”. (Female, *UNMSM*)

We should recover programs that make people think of current issues, and of how to develop, such as the *Giacosa* show, some TV news and maybe some cable news networks, or Discovery Channel programs, that provide us with a wider vision; in this way, we would know how things are now and what else we can do. This kind of programs should be rescued. With respect to the rest, much has to be discarded; I think there is plenty of programs to be removed from TV. (Male, *UNMSM*)

“For me, cultural TV programs such as those of channel 4 about fauna, or journalistic programs such as *César Hildebrandt’s* are the best. (Male, *UNMSM*) “

What I like is that on channel 7 one finds a good selection of programs. I like “*Presencia Cultural*” (*Cultural Presence*) because it provides a certain amount of culture without being boring, as is generally the case with many others. (Female, *Gran Parque de Lima*)

“The only thing I want to say is that the best of TV are educational programs such as family oriented programs, and Channel 7’s *Reportajes al Perú* (*Reports on Peru*), which are wonderful because they show our cultural heritage. They teach our own people and foreigners how beautiful and rich our country is.”

“There is only one good program on TV now: that of *Ricardo Belmont*. The rest isn’t worth watching. The same goes for publications. The only truly informative publication is *El Comercio* Newspaper. (Male, *Parque Universitario*)

The best animated cartoons include “*El Chavo del Ocho*”, which has important messages, and *Rulito Pinasco’s* “*Nadie sabe para quién trabaja*” (*literally, You never know who you work for,*) which fosters children’s intellectual growth through questions. (Female, *Parque Universitario*)

## **WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?**

### **CULTURE, EDUCATION AND RENEWAL**

This is a more difficult area to deal with. Nevertheless, there are interesting suggestions. Some of them are requests to media and others are general recommendations that seek to improve the quality of their products. Educational and cultural topics are once again on the spot. Some people suggest more public participation. Others emphasize the importance of showing the cultural side of Peru in order to create a more positive image for the rest of the world. The *Huancaino* citizen is an interesting character whose clear sense of honesty in terms of agricultural issues, is shown through a series of images. Some point out the importance of learning more about the world in order to have wider knowledge. It is a connection to the world and to the country; turning communication into an information exchange makes us all equally appreciated citizens of the same world.

A very clever citizen suggests that “dirty” programs be seen on a paid per view basis only, and not broadcast for everybody. Obviously, someone suggested the renewal of artists, script writers or directors, by searching

new national and foreign talents. The need for educational television is a central idea, strongly associated with culture and knowledge, especially for those who have not had access to higher education.

“It is also important that political programs reflect people's opinions and, at the same time, attempt to retrieve religious values which are so important in childhood. Thank you.” (Female, *Parque Kennedy*)

“They should introduce better artists, better writers, and better TV directors instead of homosexuals, or to bring them from abroad. Opportunities should be given to new talents in Peru. We should promote good artists, good and mature comics, not mediocre ones. They should also show more action films and sports. (Male, *Parque Universitario*)

“I feel that Channel 4 should change its programming for something more cultural. Our people should be exposed to more cultural programs since many do not have access to higher education. Television, as a mass medium, should accomplish this obligation. That’s all”. (Female, *Gran Parque de Lima*)

“Cultural programs are positive. Culture must be more emphasized, especially our own Peruvian culture, music and interests. We have much to offer to the world and much to learn from ourselves.”

“As a mother, I feel that more cultural and informative programs should be on. Especially necessary are those showing technological advances, world ancient cultures and, at the same time, the national values of our country where people do positive and creative activities not sufficiently appreciated. Most children today do not know areas of interest or customs of their own country.

Only a small group of children and parents consider this issue important. "(Female, *Parque Kennedy*)

"If I were the owner of a communication medium, I would automatically put aside my personal interests and would offer educational programs to the general public. That's all. Thank you". (Male, *Parque Kennedy*)

"*Risas en America*" is a hideous insult to the audience. If media want to broadcast programs like this one, people should pay to see them. If people want to watch them, they should pay the media producing this kind of programming. All TV programs should be basically clean; if somebody wants to watch dirty programs, they should pay for them. Thank you."(Male, *Parque Kennedy*)

"We should make calendars showing landscapes, nice buildings, or our own *Plaza Mayor* of Lima. For example, we should include the Valley of *Mantero*, widely known outside my town, and refrain from showing nudes, sports cars and motorcycles. Creative things, like a tractor harvesting carrots, should be shown on calendars showing both planting and harvesting. For each period of the year, the popular crop could be represented according to the month. The first of May could be represented by the harvesting of corn, while September could be represented by corn planting. Thank you very much for allowing me to express my opinion. I'm sure I can provide other opinions as well. These are things that could happen. It's not that I am in favor of privatizing everything. It's just an example. I was brought up in the country side where radio was the only source of entertainment. There were no newspapers or TV. But I came here to Lima to see other things. See you later, bye." (Male, *Parque Universitario*)



These opinions are reflected in the following tables obtained through the “*grafichangas*” and the “*macroánfora*”, in both numbers and percentages. Cultural and educational issues predominate. A better, independent quality of newspapers is also highly demanded, especially when it comes to publishing the truth. Children topics are also highlighted. The professional nature of media is highly demanded too. But the strongest point is the need to turn media into an educational tool with positive messages for the country.

If you were the owner of a TV station, what kind of programs would you broadcast?	Number	%
Cultural, educational, instructing the audience	227	29,3
Fewer soap operas, less violence, sex and gossiping	170	21,9
Honest, informative programs without manipulation	51	6,6
Entertainment and cartoons for children	42	5,4
National identity, art and dance	35	4,5
Neither homosexuals nor homosexual topics.	32	4,1
Others	89	11,5
No comments	130	16,8
Total	776	100,0

“You have the control”. Citizen Caravan in Lima. *Grafichanga*.

October-November, 2002

What should journalists and media owners do to improve the quality of TV, radio and newspapers?	Number	%
Produce cultural, educational and children’s programming.	299	28,7
Tell the truth and not be manipulated.	222	21,3
Not to broadcast negative contents, i.e. (sex, violence, homosexuality)	213	20,5
Employ only good professionals and provide opportunities for new talents.	73	7,0
Broadcast programs taking into account the appropriate time slots (children, adults and family)	59	5,7
Respect public opinion, not just ratings.	51	4,9
Others	94	9,0
No comments	30	2,9
Total	1041	100,0

“You have the control”. Citizen Caravan in Lima. *Macroánfora*.

October-November 2002.

When assuming the individual responsibility suggested by the question, consumers choose media as a possibility to improve. We all know that choosing what is good, cultural and educational, over what is bad, is not as simple as it seems due to the limited options available. Perhaps that is the reason why less effective changes occur, and people believe in a better future when more cultural and educational programs for young people will be broadcast. These are opinions and suggestions that are difficult to implement successfully in a short period of time. Twelve percent prefer pressure campaigns and marches.

As a consumer, what can you do to improve TV, radio and newspapers?	Number	%
Consume only what is good, cultural and educational. Be selective.	430	37,8
Demand more education and culture.	215	18,9
Support campaigns demanding improvement.	137	12,0
Educate children and young people better.	83	7,3
Give opinions and make suggestions to the government and media owners.	82	7,2
Others	169	14,8
No comments	23	2,0
Total	1139	100,0

“You have the control”. Citizen Caravan in Lima. “*Macroanfora*”

October-November, 2002

## II. COMMUNITY INSPECTION AND REGULATORY BOARDS TO OFFSET MEDIA’S POWER AND DETERIORATION

We are all aware of the great power of media, especially that of TV. It not only influences more and more politics, through the questioning of or support to political leaders, but also through the setting of a political agenda for the country underlining what is important and what isn't important for everyone. At the same time, media regulate what is morally acceptable in our families, as well as in local and national communities. The boundary between what is acceptable and not acceptable becomes a gray area risking the sense of human dignity. Our sense of ethics is subjected to ever more bloody and morbid stimuli that degrade intimacy. Our personal connection to the world is mediated. In some cases, a totally irresponsible position is taken when reporting what is happening<sup>5</sup> in the world, mainly due to private and personal interests; other times, information is incomplete and untruthful. From this point of view, it seems logical to feel impotent and limited to mere criticism or "complaint" about media among our families and friends. Nevertheless, our discontent is still there.

## **UNKNOWN AND INVISIBLE:**

### **Citizens without freedom of speech**

It is obvious that citizens know very little about their rights to be informed, both by the State or by mass media. The right to good quality information is a topic that has not been worked out in the country. There is a somehow intuitive ideas but no real awareness of one's rights. In other countries there are rigorously autonomous mechanisms to protect readers and TV audiences, and also codes of ethics that have been debated, assimilated, published and enforced. We are much behind when it comes to the legal aspect of communication. There is no real balance in this area.

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<sup>5</sup> See text "Televisión Parcializada" Monitoring of the political behavior of the Peruvian television. Citizen Inspectorship of Social Communication. April-May 2002.

The following table shows citizens' lack of awareness with respect to radio and television ownership. Despite the explanations given in the "You have the control" campaign concerning radio frequencies and dials, and ownership of course, the percentage of those who do not express their opinion is high (34.2%). This is more than one third of the population interviewed. A similar percentage attributes media ownership to the government and the State (31.8%). They are not aware that they just administrate concessions. Real owners, that is to say, citizens, are practically absent (6.4%). Misinformation is high due to the almost total lack of defense of citizens' rights; people are vulnerable to influence, and their capacity is underestimated. Very few know something about the present communications system in our country, far less than in other countries. According to the majority of the people interviewed, it is clear that radio and TV frequencies do not belong to the operating companies despite misinformation campaigns carried out by some TV channels involved in corruption. Only 19.9% think frequencies belong to communication companies and 7.7% believe they belong to the advertising media.

Answers show the need for a campaign to inform and educate the audience about the radio-electric spectrum used by radio and TV, about citizens' rights, and about this public and scarce asset. Once this information is assimilated by the audience, they will fight for their right to demand and express their opinion in media to demand better products.

Do you know who radio and TV frequencies belong to?	
The government	10.8%
Companies using them	19.9%
Advertising companies	7.7%
The State	21.0%
People	6.4%

No answer / No comments	34.2%
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“Your have the control”. Survey. October-November, 2002

## REGULATORY MEASURES WITH CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION

Clearly, there are those who opt for a “firm hand” when dealing with media and severely question TV and "chicha" newspapers. There are those who suggest the elimination of certain programs or media associated with corruption. But this collective spirit of indignation does not necessarily mean previous control and censure, but could be sensitive to this autocratic position if media situation does not improve. For that reason, there are those who assign an important role to the State as a regulatory instrument. Nevertheless, when the concept of a public entity is presented to perform this function, there is stronger acceptance, that is to say, a more “civic” attitude leading to a more democratic process and a smaller intervention of the State. Curiously enough, some participants prefer the authority of the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, perhaps because there is greater opportunity for influence and lobby. A citizen refers to the Ministry of Education and criticizes its passivity. Ideally, a firm hand regulation is required.

“About newspapers, "chicha" and manipulated newspapers should not be allowed to circulate. They should be censored. There should be a more strict control in photographs, information, and language; besides, they do not make any cultural contributions. Thank you.”  
(Male, *Gran Parque de Lima*)

“My opinion is very concrete. Mr. Minister of Education, who should be responsible for solving these problems in television, radio and newspapers, doesn’t show any interest in what is happening in our

country. Newspapers continue to publish trash, nudes, sex, etc. Literature and grammar are poorly structured, but nobody cares. There is no intervention of the Ministry of Education to control and censure videos, obscene photos and all that garbage we see. Nobody cares!” (Male, *Gran Parque de Lima*)

“I would like to see *Magali, Laura Bozzo, Vladimiro Montesinos* and the entire judicial system disappear from the face of the earth. Well, that's all for now”.(Female, *UNMSM*).

Most of the people interviewed are in favor of media legislation. Although democracy demands wide margins of freedom, people understand that freedom cannot be absolute. Regulating the media does not necessarily imply restricting their freedom of expression<sup>6</sup>. These answers seem to be on line with those that will appear later on. Only a little more than one fifth of the population interviewed (21.6%) do not agree with regulatory controls.

Do you agree with having regulations on media?		Total
Yes		77.3
No		21.6
No answer / No comments		1.1
	Answer frequency	3135
	Column percentage	100.0

“You have the control”. Survey. October-November, 2002

<sup>6</sup> Statement found in several polls made by Calandria between 1998 and 2001. It is one of the most renowned human rights

In previous surveys made by the Citizen Inspectorship, the same tendency favoring regulation was observed. Any variations can be explained by the context of the moment or the way in which the question was formulated. In this case, variations are more common since it was a survey. Motivation lies in people's hope not to experience again previous acts of submission to the government, especially media being "bought" as it was the case in one of the most scandalous cases of corruption in Peruvian Republican history.

Do you think regulations should be enforced so that errors committed in the past are never repeated?			Total
Yes		329	82.3%
No		71	17.8%
	Answer frequency	400	100%

Survey in Lima, April 2, 2001

The very Citizens Caravan in the "You have the control" campaign shows similar results. If we combine the responses in favor of creating a regulatory board to oversee mass media, we have 46.8%. This demonstrates a desire to have both a regulatory board and a legal base to operate from. Regulation continues to be a significant demand. Education, information and culture continue to be the desired result. Nevertheless, the call for change predominates. It is based on the average citizen's experience in terms of media and programming. It is interesting to observe that despite the formulation of the question concerning State behavior, people themselves open up the possibility for relative State intervention and even offer alternatives for media.

What should the government do to improve television, radio and newspapers?	Number	%
To create an entity to control media	347	33,3

To support cultural events in media	201	19,3
To watch over media. To create laws.	141	13,5
Not to intervene	103	9,9
To educate and inform the public.	77	7,4
Others	147	14,1
No comments	25	2,4
Total	1041	100,0

“You have the control”. Citizens Caravan in Lima. *Macroánfora*,  
October-November, 2002

When inquired about the creation of an entity to regulate and control media, it is evident that most people agree, as shown earlier. We are facing a population who believes in regulation and at the same time, in the freedom of expression<sup>6</sup>. They see no conflict between the two principles. A legal framework supported by a regulatory board would not affect media’s independence and freedom. This feeling probably coincides with the urgent need to improve media’s offer. Despite campaigns against regulation, that intend to show legislation as some kind of censure or control, it would help to improve the quality of programming, information and the overall work of media. Media themselves are to blame for creating this situation. Other countries have foreseen regulation consisting of severe and independent mechanisms of internal control and citizen participation, with the purpose of promoting self-criticism. There is no significant precedent in Peru on this matter. This creates a certain amount of skepticism towards self-regulation within the population. They don’t believe media are capable of self regulation. Defense mechanisms for the reader and the television viewer which already exist in other countries, such as an ombudsman, demonstrate responsible media’s willingness to change and self-demand. The average citizen is thus given the power to make demands and to influence media. Unfortunately, we are very much behind in this aspect.

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<sup>6</sup> This statement was found in various polls carried out by Calandria between 1998 and 2001. It is one of the most commonly mentioned human rights.



Are you in favor of or against the creation of an entity that regulates and control mass media?	Total
In favor	86.1
Against	13.7
No answer / No comments	0.2
	TOTAL ANSWERS
	3.135

“You have the control”. Survey. October-November, 2002

Therefore, the question that follows is: Who should inspect and regulate mass media? The largest percentage believes that this responsibility should rest on the civil society and not on the State; the latter could play a role that would threaten the freedom of expression, as it was the case during the last decade. Both options add up to 43.7%. This can be explained in some cases by the fact that people believe that media owners also have political power. The citizens interviewed feel that people should play a major role in any regulation. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that 11.6% of the people trust the Ombudsman’s Office, despite the fact that it isn’t one of its duties. This means that one sector recognizes the independent role of this entity, despite having been created by the State itself, and despite its capacity to defend citizens. Therefore, such a role is possible.

Almost 20% of those interviewed believe that media and journalists themselves can perform this function. This either shows confidence in them or a support to several TV channels and radio stations that launched self-regulation campaigns since 2001. One of these campaigns was political and another one was for advertisement purposes, apart from a permanent campaign of opinion. Opting for self-regulation does not mean opposition to regulation; the expression of this option allows media to vindicate themselves. Evidently, there is some variation with respect to previous surveys. Perhaps it is the result of so many campaigns against

regulation, led by the same people strongly involved in 2002. This shows that campaigns had a relative effect. In general, there is a consensus among a considerable number of people interviewed that media should indeed be regulated, and that civil society should play a major role in this function; the State and those involved in media should also participate in a lesser degree.

In your opinion, who should control and regulate contents in mass media?		Total
The State		10.8
The Church		4.0
The Ombudsman's Office		11.6
Media and journalists themselves		19.9
Advertising companies in mass media		9.2
Citizens who listen to the radio, buy newspapers or watch TV		20.4
An independent civil society institution		23.3
No answer / No comments		.7
	Answer Frequency	5388
	Answer Percentage	100.0%

“You have the control”. Survey. October-November, 2002

In the Citizen Referendum “Children see you”, that was conducted at the end of 2001, 48.9% were in favor of the intervention of civil society and of people fighting for their rights. Few have believed in self-regulation since that time. The corruption of certain media sources that sold their own independence and freedom of expression was well known. State intervention shows a lower percentage, but people still go for it. A National Council on television, which exists in other countries, seems to be a widely accepted idea. However, in this case the emphasis would be on the general guidance of the civil society, (unlike USA, Colombia and Chile),

with a greater presence of the State. It is necessary to understand clearly the concept of civil society, who belongs to it, when it was born, and what are the reasons for appointing many social, non-profit associations. This need is growing despite criticisms made by certain political sectors that compare it to NGO'S (Non-governmental Organizations) existing in the country.

What measures do you agree with in order to improve national television during the hours that children watch TV?	Frequency	Valid %
The creation of a National Council on television made up of ordinary people.	913	35.0
The State should promote cultural programs rewarding those who do the best job.	413	15.8
Pass a law outlining strict hourly timetables.	316	12.1
The application of a strict Code of Ethics such as that of the ANDA (Spanish acronym for National Association of Announcers) and the UPR (Spanish acronym for Peruvian Broadcasting Association).	216	8.3
The public should be more strict and demanding.	206	7.9
Self censorship by television channels.	170	6.5
People should demand their rights	156	6.0
State intervention in communications.	58	2.2
No answer / No comments	164	6.3
Total	2612	100.0

“Los niños te ven”. Survey. November, 2001

Along this same line of regulation approval, as long as the mechanisms and regulatory agencies are independent and made up of a public association, the acceptance of TV regulations was questioned in a survey linked to FEM TV concerning the treatment of women in soap operas and

advertising. This survey took place one year after the issue dealing with children. As we can see, responses confirm public support for regulation, especially when referenced to television in which there is growing criticism. The 20% of self-regulation acceptance decreases, which shows people's uncertainty about this issue. Probably nobody knows what regulation and self-regulation are, and whether both can coexist. But the tendency is confirmed once again when there is no evidence of change in programming or of punishment for those who commit infractions within media.

Should there be specific laws or norms, as well as a non-political civilian entity to regulate television?		Total
Yes		85.2%
No		7.3%
No answer / No comments		7.3%
	Answer Frequency	3135
	Column Percentage	100.0

FEM TV. Survey. October-November, 2002

In a national survey conducted in August 2001, when the topic of regulation was neither a public debate, nor a bill, citizens believed that they themselves played a leading role in change. Two years of dealing with this problem have helped to raise public awareness on the importance of proposing a regulatory body made up of civil society. It is interesting to note that previous preference for advertisers was stronger, and that the concept of civil society was not really present in the language used. Some are still confident in the government and other powers, although probably there would be more doubts and discrepancies on this matter today.

Who could change media?	Total
Citizens who use media.	41.5%
The central Government	19.4%
Companies which advertise in media	19.2%
Leading companies	8.5%
The Judicial Power	5.7%
Congressmen	5,5%
Others	0.1%
No answer / No comments	0.1
	Answer Frequency
	100.0%

National survey. August, 2001.

### **COMPOSITION AND COMPETENCE OF THE REGULATORY BODY, AND LICENSE GRANTING**

Given the possibility of creating a regulatory body, it was necessary to ask people about its characteristics, organization and power to grant licenses. In terms of its composition, more than half of the people surveyed believe that the regulatory body should be made up exclusively of civil institutions, which demonstrates that there is a greater confidence in civil society. Only 23,5% disagreed. However, many would not oppose the participation of the State, as concluded from the spirit of both answers. Thus, the main role should be played by civil institutions, followed by the State. This idea seems to be increasingly accepted in society. A percentage of the society does not know the answer or simply does not care to answer; this fact is a bit worrisome since they, although a minority, have not adopted a definite position. There is a certain amount of distrust concerning the role of the State and its participation in regulation, probably due to the experience with Velasquez in the 1970's, and to the illicit relationships between the government and some media during the last decade.

On the other hand, license granting is even more controversial. While most people agree that licenses should be granted by a ruling body, others believe such a body should only give an opinion and let the State make the decisions. At present, licenses are granted by the Ministry of Transportation and Communication. Renewals are automatic and license granting processes are not based on public bids. In addition, the criteria used for radio or television licenses are primarily technical and based on economic viability. Ideas on programming, professional and informative quality are not really relevant when evaluating, and this is the most important aspect to the audience.

With respect to this regulating or supervising body, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Agree	Disagree	No answer / No comments	%
It should be exclusively made up of civil society organizations.	60.4	23.5	16.1	100.0%
Both civil society organizations and State representatives should participate.	50.7	31.0	18.3	100.0%

“You have the control”. Survey. October-November 2002

3,135 participants

With respect to this regulating or supervising body, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Agree	Disagree	No answer / No comments
It should grant TV and radio licenses	53.9	28.3	17.9
It should give an opinion but not decide on license granting.	45.5	30.8	23.7

“You have the control”. Survey. October – November 2002.

3,135 participants

With respect to the topic of license granting, another question has been raised. Mass media, particularly television, brought it up to vindicate themselves in the discussion about a new legislation on telecommunications; they rejected mechanisms other than automatic license renewal. Nevertheless, 57.2% of the population are in favor of equal treatment to all enterprises, so that new ones can participate. But we can't ignore the 41.1% of the population who agree, thus protecting companies involved in corruption; these were presented as victims whose entrepreneurs and owners involved their own companies and political information in favor of the government. License granting based on legislation could open up new ways of seeing license renewal, in the sense that they should be granted according to the political forces represented in Congress. The need for transparency in these processes is thus evident. Why not publicly evaluate license requests, regardless of who would be responsible for doing so? In fact, both license granting and renewal processes should be public and visible, and should involve civil society.

With respect to granting licenses to mass media, what is the best option?	
TV licenses should be granted through open bids	57.2%
TV licenses should be renewed by legislation	41.1%
No answer / No comments	1.6%

"You have the control", October-November 2002. 3,135 participants

### **CORRUPTION vs. LICENSE HOLDING**

Interviewed citizens believe that mass media —especially TV channels— involved in acts of corruption should have their operating licenses revoked (64%). This would mean zero tolerance to impunity, supported by most of the people interviewed. Less than one third of the population disagree with corrupt channels having their licenses revoked by the State. Perhaps this sector of the population is morally permissive or has been confused by media themselves, as was shown earlier, and ignore that media owners are not the owners of frequencies. Another question arises: what country having a minimum legislation to protect citizens' rights would allow companies involved in mafia to retain their licenses? Probably none. Only in Peru one finds impunity as an excuse to preserve the freedom of expression which, of course, is not true.

It is interesting to analyze the two charts below. The first one is closely related to and was done shortly after the media campaign against regulation. Such campaign was associated with control and censorship. It tried to ignore media owners' corruption, even though they all accept the existence of a political line of pro-government propaganda. On the other hand, the second chart was done at a time when media's defensive and accusative attitude against legislation did not exist. The influence of media is obvious, but it is not enough to move the general opinion towards regulation. Both surveys are based on questions and answers; however, there is a general acceptance of 23.6% in the first one, while in the second one a more radical reaction against corruption can be observed.

Do you believe that TV channels participating in illicit acts should have their licenses revoked by the State?		Total
Yes		64.0%
No		23.6%
No answer / No comments		12.4
	Answer Frequency	3135



Column percentage	100.0
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“You have the control”. Survey. October-November 2002

In the event media owners were found guilty of receiving money or favors, what should the punishment be?	Frequencies	Total
They should be disqualified to manage media	170	42.58
They should be imprisoned	117	29.3%
They should be fined	64	16.0%
They should receive moral punishment	45	11.3%
Others	4	1.0%
Total	400	100.0 %

Survey in Lima April, 2001

#### ##RADIO AND TELEVISION LEGISLATION IS A PRIORITY

It should be discussed by the Congress and Society

Radio and television legislation should be debated! This is a citizens' claim made to the political class represented in the Parliament. The project should be a priority according to 69.9% of the people polled. After eight months of silence in complicity with media it was approved by a multi-party Congress Commission. The projected agenda for the second session of the current period is expected to be fulfilled and the legislation be debated listening to the citizens' and civil society organizations proposals. Each citizen's daily anger must be taken into account. In this way, we hope our representatives find this document useful.

Do you believe that....?		Total
Congress should give priority to radio and television legislation.		69.9%
The Congress should discuss other laws.		28.5%
No answer / no comments		1.6
	Interviewed	3135

### III. CONCLUSIONS

1. Communication media are really being questioned by citizens, specially open signal channel television and the so-called newspapers yellow press or “scandal sheets” which are not up to par when it comes to information and entertainment. There is a collective concern for the moral deterioration of these media and their impact on citizens, especially on children. This crisis is sometimes associated with corruption. In other cases, it is irrefutable evidence of the little respect the media has for the general public and its inability to interrelate with it beyond business. Education, cultural advances, and the promotion of learning processes are not being prioritized and the little programming offer isn’t even presented in an entertaining manner. Peru isn’t being much promoted in a constructive fashion. This policy is clear evidence of lack of progress in a country where media should really assume a different route and help us to be better individuals and overcome our deficiencies and conflicts. Entertainment cannot be divorced from ethical responsibility. For many people these criticisms are supported by a feeling of almost uncontrollable indignation and an ever increasing thirst for change, not only in media, but in the country.

2. Criticism is expressed at the information level pointing out the lack of journalistic projects that keep society informed, so that it can better understand a reality useful to everyone and respectful of ethical principles of independence, in-depth news, and truth. Violence and blood incidents are especially condemned for being merely descriptive, even repugnant. Another point of criticism is the negative image of the country that generates hopelessness. Constituting a culture of “positive action” in the country is also media’s responsibility, which in turn contributes to the objective and subjective development of democracy. But they are not doing so.
  
3. Entertainment is declining in moral standards at a very rapid pace that must be stopped. Television and “scandal sheets” media are contested as “trash”. Sexuality is not only exacerbated but deformed by the daily public images we watch. A radical approach must be taken since entertainment must not be in conflict with ethics and aesthetics, but should rather be in line with them. Therefore a coherent and significant cultural proposal must be presented for the progress of the country and for citizens to learn more about their country and the world. We must demand that media provide us with a cultural project based not what we are and what we want to become.
  
4. There seems to be a contradiction between “rating” as an indicator of success and citizen judgment when it comes to the ethical and esthetic quality offered by media. There are two ways of evaluating mass media impact. One is measured in the number of viewers or listeners, in terms of TV set turned on. The second reflects public’s satisfaction and appreciation of the media they receive. By actually participating, the public has a leading role in their opinions so they

can be known better. The citizen and interlocutor is not taken into consideration for their audience studies. His word is worthless. Therefore, media must change their policy when dealing with citizens. Media should listen to them and discuss with them to come to agreements. It would be highly constructive if media began a process of ethical and methodological transformation in this area, which is mostly important in defining communication itself.

5. The question asked by many people including experts is: why do people consume material they question and does not satisfy them? To answer this it is important to consider what the public is exposed to on a daily basis. Daily routines are now defined by television, not only during leisure moments but also as a company to perform chores; it even makes part of our family dialogs and exchanges. It is almost impossible to get rid of television, and the only alternative is to watch what is broadcast. And if they do not access cable television, the choice alternatives are restricted to different options of the same thing. Even so, many people want to know what is going on in the country and search for news programs that report on the national situation. Even though they may be against the various informative styles they still depend on them to live and to know what to do. There are requests for more orientation in sentimental affairs that young women never receive either from their family, friends, or their school. So they are reduced to watching talk shows and soap operas that mirror what they are experiencing or want to know. There are also people with sexual frustration who require visual stimulation. That is how people are subjectively hooked up. Also morbidity and curiosity have a role which defines complicity, and obviously looks for scandals, particularly if another kind of curiosity is no stimulated. If these entertainment options can not be compared to others of higher

quality, a vicious consumption circle closes and there is an empty and even harmful rating. Trash television turns out to be a necessary part of the audience who gets used to it. Due to the lack of money and information the programs are condemned to mediocrity and this should not happen. Nevertheless, there are some sectors happy with what they see but they are marginal and there are people who buy newspapers because they are inexpensive, entertain them and make them laugh. But it isn't logical to watch the loser and keep pushing him to descend even more. Although feelings, attitudes and environments offered end up being shared by people, we cannot say that the supply of these questioned media is people's transparent and wished demand. When the possibility is offered to think about the situation and evaluate it very different proposals are offered.

6. Citizen discussion and information about communication legislation in the country and the world must be encouraged pointing out the areas of conflict and the motives for discrepancies. The make up and defense of people's rights on informative and entertainment issues must be determined, released publicly and debated on a mass scale. The discussion on the legal proposal proposed by the Congressional Transportation and Communications Commission must be presented to the public in an informative manner. It is the consumer who has the right to speak because he is the main speaker and the most immediately affected. In fact, deliberation on the role of media is possible with traditional methods such as surveys or interviews with experts, but other methods that are as plural, good and innovative as polls, and citizen fairs and caravans since they inspire debate and mutual enrichment in the field of information and public opinion by directly and creatively using public forums. Educating people in the communications field is

urgently needed in the country from all institutions and using all kinds of methodologies.

7. The poll shows that the discussion of the bill by the Congress in full should be accomplished promptly and urgently together with citizen forums and actual audience participation, according to the suggested methodologies in which our voices are heard and our opinions discussed constructively.
8. Most citizens accept mass media regulation especially for those people who use the electromagnetic spectrum that belongs to all of us. Regulating means to have a legal base that establishes the limits on ethical and cultural quality for the programs broadcast by radio and television. At the same time the media themselves must adopt within their own institution mechanisms of citizen participation and self-criticism for their supply as a guarantee of a balance of power that must exist between media and citizens as it exists between society and politics. Regulation and self-regulation are not contradictory but rather complementary measures to create media that should be more responsible for what they offer, and for the consequences and impact of their messages in the country and on its people.
9. Licenses should be granted through bids from time to time, guaranteeing an efficient corporate competition. And there should be a smaller but not less important set of norms that indicate when a company can lose its license concession since corruption and the lack of respect for freedom of expression are sufficient motives to lose the right to use the licenses publicly.
10. Most citizens are in favor of creating a regulatory board or body for radio and television in which the civil society and citizens have a

significant and major participation. To improve radio and television in Peru requires a collective effort to change them and improve their aesthetical and ethical quality. Whether well-intentioned politicians and businessmen could contribute, the people who have no vested interests and know about communication, should help the most.

## **ANNEX 1**

Results of the Citizen Caravan

Done for the campaign “You have the control”, carried out by the Citizens’ Inspectorship from September 14 to 24, 2002.

### **METHODOLOGICAL PROPOSAL OF THE CITIZEN CARAVAN**

An expression and participation show takes the city.

The Citizen Caravan is an educational and communicative show-type of activity that took place in four public spaces of the city of Lima, as part of a citizens’ campaign to oversee mass media. Why don’t you tell radio stations, TV channels and newspapers your opinion about what they offer? You have the control. The Caravan’s objectives are the following:

- To open a public debate in public forums about the relationship we citizens have with mass media and the importance to practice our rights to demand and oversee improvements in entertainment and information programming.
- To consult the feelings and opinions of the male and female citizens concerning the quality of what is offered by mass media and the possibility of improving it.
- To share useful and practical information with the public emphasizing the right to demand better quality from media.

The citizen's campaign included two types of actions:

A Referendum. A module was installed in each plaza so that citizens could participate. It contained several resources for collecting public opinion:

- “*Rajecabina*”: a large, brightly colored booth where people could express their feelings without being heard or seen. Their opinions were registered through a microphone installed inside. On the curtain at the entrance of the booth, this question was written: What is the Best and the Worst that television, radio and newspapers are currently showing?
  
- “*Grafichanga*”: an appealing space that invites men and women to express freely, openly and anonymously. It consists of a large white wall at a strategic point in the plaza, where a provoking question or a statement —like the following— is written to foster comments expressed in drawings or texts: Draw what you would consider to be a good TV program, if you were the owner of a TV network.
  
- “*Macroánfora*”: a large multi-colored box in which people deposit cards with their proposals and suggestions about questions asked. Also, a group of people with mobile boxes on their backs walk around collecting the opinions and proposals of people in the street near the module. These are the questions:
  - As a consumer, what can you do to improve television, radio and newspapers?
  - What should the government do to improve television, radio and newspapers?
  - What should media owners do to improve television, radio and newspapers?

“*Videoconversa*”. After projecting the video “You have the Control” on a giant screen, Dano and Dana —leaders of the Caravana— held a



conversation with the people gathered in the plaza inquiring them about their feelings and opinions. Everything that was expressed and discussed was shown on the screen.

The topics of conversation were organized around four main ideas:

- The complicity of mass media consumers

People complain about the poor quality of the programs they watch, but they stick to the screen.

Why does this happen? Why do we watch and listen to what we don't like?

- Media consumer's rights

Many of the programs we complain about have high ratings; many people watch and listen to them. That is why channels say that the audience is happy with the programs being offered. Ratings are sacred to media; they are the voice of the people. However, ratings do not express everything the audience thinks. People have a lot to say to media. The point is that we get used to what we watch. We consume whatever there is on TV, radio and newspapers, and we do not expect anything better from them.

We are not just consumers but mainly citizens with equal rights. Of course we can demand that media respect our rights. We should be more demanding.

Do we, consumers, have the right to make demands on media? What would you demand from them?

We all have the right to:

- Receive a variety of good quality entertainment.

- Have access to truthful and complete information.
- Be informed about different opinions concerning a given topic.
- Express freely our opinions and to be respected.

- Citizens' proposals to improve media

We all agree that citizens have the right to good quality communication. We are not happy with what we see, hear and read in the media. We agree that media must improve in order to respect our rights. But we, consumers, must do something.

What can you do at home?

What can we do together?

Examples of actions taken in other countries are mentioned. Our friends from Citizens' Communication Inspectorship relate some experiences of other countries.

- Radio and TV regulation

Citizens cannot act alone. We need the State and the media to participate in the regulation of contents, quality and time schedules, and also in the defense of our rights.

By the way, some time ago there was a lot of discussion about a legislation on radio and television. What happened with all that?

Our friends from the Citizens' Inspectorship on Social Communication can clear this up.

Why is it a legislation only for radio and TV? What is its purpose?

What is the status of the legislation today, and what can we, citizens, do to improve and approve such legislation?

What is the Citizen Social Communication Inspectorship? How can we participate in it?

### **Statistics on the participation of Citizen Caravan**

In its two action modalities, the Citizen Caravan went through four zones of the city: *Parque Kennedy* in the *Miraflores* District; the *Universidad Nacional de San Marcos* campus (*UNMSM*); the *Gran Parque de Lima*, and the *Parque Universitario*, all of them located in the city limits of Lima.

- In *Parque Kennedy* a caravan was organized on the night September 14. It was attended by 927 people<sup>7</sup>, out of which 835 expressed their opinions (194 in “*grafichanga*”, 34 in “*rajecabina*” and 607 in “*macroanfora*”).
- At *Universidad Nacional Mayor of San Marcos (UNMSM)*, there was public participation in the morning and in the afternoon of Friday, September 20. A total number of 2,650 people attended, out of which 1,279 participated with their opinion (124 in “*grafichanga*”, 64 in “*rajecabina*”, and 1091 in “*macroanfora*”).
- In the *Gran Parque de Lima*, there was a citizen caravan on Sunday morning and afternoon, September 22. There was also a “*videoconversa*” that same night. The total attendance was 2,600 people, out of which 266 participated in the “*videoconversa*” at night (95 in “*grafichanga*”, 21 in “*rajecabina*”, 150 in “*macroanfora*”), and 1132 throughout the day (209 in “*grafichanga*”, 120 in “*rajecabina*”, and 803 in “*macroanfora*”).

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<sup>7</sup> Total coverage is calculated on the basis of the number of leaflets handed out to attending people in each plaza.

- In *Parque Universitario*, a public meeting took place on Tuesday morning and afternoon, September 24. Also, a “*videoconversa*” took place that same night. The number of people attending the meeting was 2,900, out of which 212 participated in the “*videoconversa*” at night (61 in “*grafichanga*”, 28 in “*rajecabina*”, and 123 in “*macroanfora*”), and 590 during the day (93 in “*grafichanga*”, 50 in “*rajecabina*”, and 447 in “*macroanfora*”).

Therefore, the total coverage of the Citizen Caravan in Lima for the “You have the control” campaign was 9077 people, out of which 4314 actually participated in the survey mechanisms used.