



College Students in Lima: Politics, Media and Participation

Jóvenes universitarios en Lima: Política, medios y participación

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ABSTRACT

In Peru, young college students have leading roles in social protest mobilizations even when they seldom belong to political organizations. This study aims to analyze the perception of current politics and its institutions among young college students, and to inquire into their interest on relevant events at their surroundings and into the importance gained by the media and the social networks concerning their information. The purpose of this project is also to examine the role assigned by college students to the university as a space of personal development and reflection. This project was carried out in Lima, Peru, directed to youngsters aged 17 to 25 from public and private universities. Opinions have been collected through six focus-groups and a survey applied to more than 400 students. The analysis concludes that college students distrust profoundly political parties and formal political organizations; likewise it shows they have a broad access to information sources, so as their willingness to solve Peru's problematic issues. It also uncovers clear differences between students of private and public universities regarding attitudes for participating in political action, inside and outside the campus. From the study stems a proposal to provide young students at their campuses with opportunities to debate public issues of national and global interest as a part of their overall academic training.

RESUMEN

En el Perú, los jóvenes universitarios son protagonistas de movilizaciones de protesta social aun cuando es escasa su pertenencia a organizaciones políticas. Esta investigación tiene como objetivos analizar la percepción que tienen los jóvenes universitarios limeños sobre la política y sus instituciones e indagar acerca de su interés por los sucesos relevantes de su entorno y la importancia que adquieren los medios de comunicación y las redes digitales para su información. El trabajo también se propuso examinar el rol que los universitarios le asignan a la universidad como espacio de formación y reflexión. El estudio se realiza en Lima, Perú, con jóvenes de 17 a 25 años, de universidades públicas y privadas. Las opiniones se recogen en seis grupos focales y una encuesta aplicada a más de 400 estudiantes. El análisis concluye que los universitarios desconfían profundamente de los partidos políticos y las organizaciones políticas formales; asimismo, se evidencia que gozan de amplio acceso a fuentes de información y están dispuestos a contribuir a la solución de los problemas que aquejan a su país. El estudio desvela diferencias marcadas entre estudiantes de universidades públicas y privadas en su disposición para participar en actividades políticas, dentro y fuera del ámbito universitario. La investigación propone que la universidad ofrezca a los jóvenes oportunidades para el debate de los asuntos públicos de interés nacional y global en su formación integral.

KEYWORDS | PALABRAS CLAVE

University, youth, students, politics, media, social networks, participation, information.

Universidad, jóvenes, estudiantes, política, medios de comunicación, redes sociales, participación, información.



1. Introduction

Influenced by the Córdoba Manifesto, Peruvian universities opened their doors to student participation and academic freedom and acquired greater autonomy in their management in the early decades of the twentieth century (Carrion, 2002). Subsequently, during the decades of 1960 and 1970, population growth, massive dislocation of rural population to the cities, and the emerging industrial development helped create a greater demand for education (Lynch, 1990). The legislature enacted Law No. 882 in 1996 that allowed the establishment of private universities as profit organizations. Thus, new private universities have been consolidated, now numbering 91 (INEI, n.d), and that these organizations overlook the role of research pertaining to the intellectual endeavor by prioritizing the training of professionals for their role in field work, (Benavides, León, Haag, & Cave, 2015). In contrast, only 51 universities belong to the public sector. Topics of discussion are massification, lack of research, and problems with management (Lynch, 2006). In light of this situation, it seems only reasonable that the concerns of the students focus on establishing a better administration for the services they receive in order to secure their professional future.

We began our study in the year 2015, which was a time of political effervescence. Protests led by young people of various groups and the opposition of the university student organizations against Law 30288 of 2014, which introduced a new regime detrimental to 18–24-year-old freshmen workers stand out as antecedents (Fernández-Maldonado, 2015). Another factor defining the political environment was the announcement of general elections (presidential and congressional) in April 2016. In Peru, voting is mandatory, and one can join the Congress at age 25. According to the First National Survey of the Peruvian Youth, 1665 people have been elected as local and regional authorities at a national level. A significant fact about the connection between university and politics is that out of the 130 recently elected members of Congress, only 104 hold a university degree (National Elections, 2016).

1.1. Conceptual assumptions

The concept of citizenship refers to a set of institutions, obligations, and social practices (Soysal, 2010). Therefore, in the framework of corporate social responsibility, universities must encourage students to gain knowledge and pursue research on issues relevant to national and international arenas, such as world poverty and climate change, and should encourage the participation of young people in the matters of public interest (Gasca-Pliego & Olvera-Garcia, 2011).

Various studies suggest the role of the Internet and social networks in the protests involving young people, attributing a determining role to social networks because they would be “the only way in which these generations can control governments and institutions. Through them, they can discuss, organize and mobilize” (Yuste, 2015: 186). A “digital citizenship” can “provide political, social, and cultural experiences of action, communication, reflection, and creation, unpublished...” (Natal, Benítez, & Ortiz, 2014: 9-10). However, others belittle the civic engagement of young citizens by saying that “there is a need for other preconditions of awareness and triggers to engage in committed public practices” (Padilla-de-la-Torre, 2014: 9). An intensive use of social networks, especially Facebook, does not necessarily correspond to a greater exposure to political information; nevertheless, more in-depth studies need to be conducted on the search for political information using digital platforms (Ohme, Albaek, & de-Vreese, 2016).

Regarding the problems that concern youth today, young people transcend their class status and connect with various, wider interests related to both personal experiences as well as worldviews and their broad access to mass media: “When groups of young people employ alternative concepts of race, youth, women, nature, democracy, citizenship, justice, which question and confront dominant cultural meanings, they are pursuing cultural policy” (Delgado-Salazar & Arias-Herrera, 2011: 293).

Youth organization or mobilizations’ power of transformation is “not in creating a change in society through the modification of the law but in generating new dynamics of coexistence and relationships through the intervention at a micro level. It is precisely here, for us, that lies their renewed citizen dimension” (Delgado-Salazar & Arias-Herrera, 2011: 294). Politics include every day as well as cultural interests.

2. Material and methods

This article has its origin in the project “Young People and Politics: A Case Study on the University Students from Lima” that, sponsored by the Institute of Scientific Research of the University of Lima, was carried out between April 2015 and March 2016. It was a non-experimental joint research under exploratory and descriptive approaches.

The perception of young university students on the policies and institutions as well as the use of media and digital networks for obtaining information on the subject is determined objectively as well as subjectively. Their study requires a descriptive and an exploratory approach. The qualitative methodology allows in-depth investigations on perceptions, motivations, impediments, conceptualizations, fears, profound reasons, and ratings, while the quantitative concerns knowledge, preferences, habits, and customs. Complementing one approach with the other allows an integral vision of the relevant phenomenon.

Initially, a qualitative study was conducted with the group dynamics technique to confirm the variables of the survey. A pilot focus group was formed by three universities with two categories of university students (independent and uninterested), belonging to humanities and sciences, and with, at least, two years of study. This stage of the investigation allowed the determination of those variables that have a decisive influence on the relation between politics, academics, media, and networks. Subsequently, six mixed group dynamics (men and women) were conducted, three with students from public universities and three with students from private universities by employing a manual of flexible guidelines;

all students were between the ages of 17 and 25 years. Next, the dimensions considering the variables were determined, and the indicators that would allow measuring these dimensions were defined. As stated, these indicators were assembled in a structured questionnaire that was administered to 20 young people with similar characteristics to the study's objective.

The survey was conducted between November 23rd and December 3rd of 2015, to a statistical sample of 403 university

students in Metropolitan Lima who met the characteristics of the target group of the study. The non-probability for convenience procedure was applied, intercepting students at the university entrances on different days and times. We verified the collected information and ensured the correct application of the questionnaires with the help of a team of supervisors, who satisfactorily fulfilled their role.

Afterward, 100% of applied questionnaires were reviewed to detect systematic errors and omissions that are inevitable in this type of application.

After the lifting of codes of the open questions, the code book was elaborated, and we proceeded with the encoding. All the information was digitized for processing and organization in statistical tables using SPSS, version 23.0.

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3. Analysis and results

The results were obtained by analyzing the focus groups and the survey. Three main topics were considered: (a) University and politics; (b) mass media, and (c) participation. A fourth topic concepts and discourses will be reported in a future article.

Of the respondents, 68% belong to private universities and 32% to public universities, which represents the universe of universities according to official data (INEI, s.f./ b & c); Benavides, León, Haag, & Cave, 2015). Of the total number of university students surveyed, 65% corresponds to those interested in politics, although they are independent; 20% are disinterested in politics, and 15% are affiliated with a political party or group.

3.1. University students: Interested in politics and the future of the country?

Despite the estrangement from politics displayed by the university students, they consider that studying provides them with knowledge of reality and that every student must commit to being a good citizen (97.1%) and must be concerned with the nation's problems (95.8%).

The students from the public universities are aware of their privilege because they have access to free university studies provided by the State. They have an advantage over those who do not enjoy this benefit, and this obliges them to remunerate the country with the fruits of their knowledge: "The student from a national university has a greater responsibility, such as giving back to the country what has been invested in their education because practically, Peru is educating us" (disinterested, public university [hereinafter public U]). Nevertheless, there is no clarity regarding the opportunities or the ways to give back: "We belong to public universities, our role in society is to contribute to the improvement of the country with what we can do in our different areas" (organized, public U.); "Not only have I entered the university to study but to contribute to my university and fight for my rights and those of others" (independent, public U.). While the independent and organized students express a more direct will to immediately contribute to the national policy and toward a more developed country through controls and social and personal responsibility, the uninterested are more skeptical about the effectiveness of their participation.

The students from private universities manifest their concerns about the relevant issues of the country, but they prioritize their professional training: "University teaches us to be more educated, to learn more about life, also about the country. It will make us professionals who can assist the country" (independent, private university [hereinafter private U]); "We are upcoming professionals who will generate profits for Peru in the future" (uninterested, private U.).

3.2. Should universities promote political debate?

For young people, the university should be a place for studying and learning to express their views freely, organizing debates (92.1%), and participating in political activities (84.9%). A smaller percentage states that universities should authorize political activities inside their campuses (52.4%). The organized and independent students from public and private universities approved the various forms of political activity if they related to the vindication of their rights as students, the defense of academic interests, and the control of the behavior of their authorities. Furthermore, they considered debates and talks appropriate but did not feel organizations regarding political parties to be intrinsic to the university life. The uninterested wanted peace and tranquility at the university because politics could distract them from their academic goals; they did not agree with the promotion of debates at the university, despite admitting that the problems of the country were not unrelated to the student life.

Most agreed that political participation within the university occurred through the student representatives as intermediaries to the authorities: "If one wants to make a claim, the entire student body cannot go and complain; there must be representatives of the faculty, in a way that is politics" (uninterested, public U.). It is a topic of greater concerns to those of public universities. In some for-profit private universities, there is no student participation at all in the governing body.

3.3. Is mass media a platform for university students to learn about public affairs?

The media occupy a menacing place in the life of the university students. They argue that these media exert much influence on public opinion (97.2%), although they may not provide a clear picture of what is important for the country (only 68.1%). The independent students and students uninterested in politics exhibit greater doubts about the quality of information than organized students. All students agree that the information the media provide contributes directly to their perception of the country but criticize the performance of these platforms. The organized students from public and private universities are incisive: they research more about politics and identify the business nature of the media and their connection with power and corruption. "Most media are linked to a political party because the media has enormous power over public opinion, and it can be considered that media themselves constitute a power" (organized, public U.). They display a disposition not only to learn but also to understand politics.

While these students also constantly and sustainedly use media, they express their distrust too; they do not immediately identify with a particular opinion. They review various sources: "I do not rely on a single source, I learn from different ones, and from there, I make my opinion" (uninterested, public U.). "To know what's going on, one cannot rely on one article or two; different media must be used" (organized, public U.).

3.4. Which media is preferred by students for learning about political affairs?

Television is the medium most widely used, followed by the Internet, the newspapers, and the radio. The students from public universities read newspapers and listen to the radio more than those from private universities

(Table 1). Additionally, the former exhibits greater interest and are more active browsing for information than the latter; they also consult more sources.

The consumption of all media by organized students from public and private universities is above the average level, and this comparison of sources empowers them to build their informative ideas on public affairs. For their part, the students from public universities seek more information, denoting higher interest in general matters. The uninterested students from

Table 1. Mass media use by student category and university type						
	Total	Organized	Independent	Uninterested	Private University	Public University
Television	76.9%	83.1%	75.6%	76.5%	76.7%	77.4%
Internet	53.9%	69.9%	52.3%	46.9%	51.3%	59.3%
Newspapers	44.9%	61.2%	43.1%	38.3%	39.2%	57.0%
Radio	40.9%	61.8%	36.5%	39.5%	38.7%	45.7%

private universities pay attention to news that affects their daily lives: "While I do my things, I turn on the news, and they talk about politics, accidents; what catches my attention is the lack of security in the country; I listen to be forewarned lest something happens to me. One must be updated on the modalities of theft to foresee potential danger" (uninterested, private U.).

The accessibility, timeliness, and immediacy associated with the Internet express a pragmatic assessment of that technological environment, but it is powered with the scarce seriousness attached to it.

University students, in general, appreciate more the opportunity to have access to the information promptly than the possibility of issuing information. The organized appreciate the opportunity to comment, while the uninterested enjoy the variety and entertainment.

The extreme dynamism of the networks facilitates the consumption of media on the various platforms. Thus, for example, students access journals through their mobile phones. "I visit the websites of newspapers and television channels; thanks to technology, it is not necessary to wait for the following day. The Internet is everything now, and social networks give you the option to comment" (independent, public U.). They can access these media at any place: "In your phone, you have it so fast, you can browse the information while in your car; it is more portable. On the contrary, to view the information on the television you must be in your home or at a restaurant" (independent, private U.).

Young people use networks to communicate, learn, and participate. They value the possibility of expressing their opinions and recognize other qualities such as the absence of censorship and the option of considering different viewpoints. While the organized students think networks can convoke, allow you to have a say, be democratic, and contribute to politics, the independent find the networks' immediacy in news availability helpful for political participation. For the uninterested students, networks matter less in relation to politics. It should be noted that they all have knowledge of the networks and a vast experience in their everyday life, but they manifest distrust about the veracity of the available information.

Although there is no absolute credibility assigned to the networks, students appreciate their open nature: "Everyone can make their voices heard. If social networks did not exist, only the people with power in the media

would be heard. Due to the networks, us or less-renowned people, with few resources to participate in the media, can also express their opinion" (uninterested, private U.); "I don't trust much in the Internet media; they can share news that can be deleted instantly, because on the Internet anyone can upload information

Table 2. Assessment of the media through which the students informed themselves				
	Radio	Television	Newspapers	Internet
Topicality/immediacy	29.1%	21.3%	25.0%	34.2%
Variety	26.6%	22.6%	18.9%	22.6%
Seriousness	23.3%	22.0%	30.5%	6.3%
Voice	21.1%	6.9%	4.2%	21.2%
Entertainment	18.9%	27.9%	6.8%	14.1%
Easy access	18.0%	18.4%	21.0%	43.4%
News Relevance	15.7%	19.2%	17.6%	4.6%
Access to other views	14.5%	10.0%	8.4%	17.6%
Impartiality	11.3%	12.0%	15.5%	11.1%
Depth of information	6.7%	12.1%	19.4%	11.2%
Political independence	6.6%	6.5%	7.7%	10.1%

which he or she believes or thinks and that is not necessarily correct in terms of the truthfulness or facts” (independent, private U.); “Many debates are generated on Twitter, on Facebook; you realize that your opinion may be valid, but you see that the view of another person is also valid, and from there, you can discern more clearly” (organized, public U.).

When asked, more than 50% of the students pointed out that social networks were useful for organizing and convening people and learning to express oneself freely. However, they resort to the face-to-face interaction to discuss politics with their parents and relatives (74.8%), with friends and colleagues (66.9%) and with professors (33%). The political debates on social networks garner fewer results (17.7%). Moreover, the students from public universities (23.8%) interact much more than those of private universities (14.9%).

It is surprising that while university students unanimously recognized that social networks enabled the horizontal communication and the democratization of opinion, they did not see themselves as protagonists, and rather, their practices are fundamentally linked to consumption of social networks.

3.5. Mobilization and participation of university students in public affairs

Students agree that protests are a legitimate right of expression (94%) if they occur without violence or generate disturbances affecting the city and citizens. They point out that the protests are an expression of dissatisfaction with the ineffectiveness of the Government: “It is a right of every citizen to protest, but the State should not expect that the population reaches to that point; it is because you are not being heard” (independent, private U.). Moreover, they state that they would protest for the unresolved issues of the country, such as the defense of human rights, abortion, and the need for greater investment in education and sport.

They argue that the protests of the youth are always against any injustice (84.1%) and that it is a civil right to take it to the streets to protest (88.9%). They disagree with the idea that protests are a waste of time (85.3%) and assert that the function of protests is to make known to all the country what is happening (87%) as well as be acts of freedom of expression (94%).

There are gross differences between the students from private and public universities about the direction of the protests. The topic is sensitive among the students from private universities who are resistant to direct political intervention: “they create much disturbance, and the truth is that sometimes they make noise and cause problems on the streets, they even fight” (disinterested, private U.). They also point out that protests are meritorious although they do not completely agree about their necessity. “They use force to be heard, and I do not believe that this is the way, but ultimately, it is a form of expression” (organized, U. private).

Everybody would protest about issues related to student and labor benefits or that affect them personally:

“Protests create a current of opinion because people are being informed when watching; they raise awareness for participation and about the

	Total	Organized	Independent	Uninterested	Private University	Public University
Lack of citizen security	64.6%	55.7%	69.0%	56.8%	61.9%	70.2%
Corruption	63.0%	74.8%	64.5%	49.4%	60.1%	69.1%
University law	54.4%	58.7%	56.9%	43.2%	50.8%	62.0%
TV trash	42.0%	39.1%	44.2%	37.0%	39.4%	47.4%
Human rights	40.0%	44.9%	37.6%	44.4%	38.8%	42.7%
Labor law	37.4%	48.5%	36.0%	33.3%	30.5%	51.8%
Defense of animals	33.7%	37.8%	32.5%	34.6%	31.3%	38.9%
Abortion	31.9%	38.0%	32.0%	27.2%	27.5%	41.3%
Environment	31.4%	33.8%	31.0%	30.9%	27.9%	38.7%
Death penalty	27.4%	36.7%	26.4%	23.5%	22.7%	37.2%
Racial discrimination	27.3%	26.7%	28.9%	22.2%	25.9%	30.2%
Civil union	23.0%	22.2%	23.9%	21.0%	23.2%	22.6%

need to defend your rights” (independent, public U.). In the face of this comprehensive position, it is surprising why the surveyed students declared such scarce active participation: the majority has not participated in protests (87%), while only 10.1% participates sometimes. The organized students from public universities are the ones who participate the most.

3.6. About what do the university students worry?

The topics of interest identified in the focus groups, some of which resulted in street protests, are displayed in Table 3.

More or less, these are the issues that attract the attention of the students. The public university and the organized students display higher interest in the lack of civil security, university laws, TV trash, and discrimination. The defense of the environment is of more interest to the students from public universities and less to those from the private. Corruption, labor law, law of universities, abortion and death penalty are of most interest to the organized and public university students.

The independents express and comment, with interest and expectation, on more prominent topics. The majority states having protested for the defense of animals (57.1%), followed by for the defense of human rights and the environment and against racial discrimination and the death penalty. The public university and organized students mention having participated in actions against corruption as well as against TV trash, lack of public security, university laws, and civil union. The organized students have protested more for the abovementioned topics. They also agree on theater, dance, and collective actions on the street being effective forms of political expression (71.6%); the uninterested join these activities in a significantly lower percentage.

4. Discussion and conclusions

The widespread discredit of political institutions in Peru, the proximity of the national elections, and some successful protests promoted by the youth with the support of the media and social networks (Fernández-Maldonado, 2015) form the context that helps in understanding the findings of this study.

In Lima, the university students express interest in politics though the number of those who decide to organize themselves into political parties or groups is small; this is a time of great disrepute of politics, not only in Peru but also in the world. There is a detachment from the traditional parties, although that does not mean distance from public affairs and new political ideas (Aguilar, 2011; Padilla-de-la-Torre, 2015; Reguillo, 2000; Krauskopf, 1998). While all students are interested in the problems of the country, for the private university and uninterested students, it is a future commitment, postponed for when they belong to the working class. Public university, organized, and independent students observe the current situation with more attention than their private university and uninterested counterparts, and they feel more immediately and directly committed because they acknowledge their indebtedness to the country for the free education they receive. It is worth highlighting that both public and private university students recognize their privileged status because they possess knowledge and information, which leads them to affirm their commitment to be good students.

All students express a fear of the violence that political protests can generate in public spaces. The students from private universities are more concerned than others because they fear the disorder would disrupt their academics. The years of political violence in the country and the constant emphasis on the media and politicians on their effects on economic growth are possible causes of these fears.

There are no unanimous views on the scope that political activities should have in the university. This is adopted by the organized students and occurs in public universities, wherein internal corruption is dealt with daily, and many shortages and the lack of security explain the students' interest in addressing these issues. On the contrary, private university and uninterested students are skeptical. This attitude can be explained in the case of private universities through the existence of organizational and business models that do not demand the involvement of students in their management. Thus, the lack of political activity in the private universities has its roots not in the indifference of the youth but in institutional policies because the universities themselves are restricting the participation of the students, slowing down their deliberative and propositional capacity (Sota, 2002).

The university students of Lima have an ongoing relationship with the media. They are the students' primary source of information, but the students have critical opinions that lead them to distrust and find supplementary sources. This search drives them to confront sources and endorses the information in other media, enlarge it, and to seek other opinions (Catalina-García, García-Jiménez, & Montes-Vozmediano, 2015: 601-619; Yuste, 2015). They also use their relationships and familiar and fraternal interactions (Castells 2007: 381). They recognize the power of the media in daily information, though they question the quality because of their personal interests, an aspect particularly highlighted by the organized students. Television is the medium most used for collecting information, while the other media are consumed through various screens and platforms. In this regard, agreeing with García-Avilés and others (2014), it was noted that the journalistic enterprises are still reliable because in all cases, diaries were mentioned. The amount of consumption and the critical attitude of the organized students is notorious.

Although there is much access to digital media, there is an underutilization of social networks, which reflects on the low percentage of students who begin to build autonomy through these (Castells, 2007). In general, the majority

reproduces, against digital media, the attitude they have towards traditional media; however, they do not interact and limit themselves to follow, comment, or exchange information with their immediate peers, even though they recognize these media for their interactive potential. This is in contrast to what is discovered in other contexts, such as in Madrid, Tunisia or Egypt, where the questioning of the traditional vertical sources leads to searching for alternative sources, horizontal and interactive construction of community, and participation with greater autonomy, oriented towards political change (Castells, 2007; Almansa-Martínez, 2016). In the case of this study, the mere use of social networks does not produce nor manage protests. Only the organized students prove to be effective in this regard, noticeable in the organization of some protests through these networks.

There is a disposition and sensitivity to new global issues such as the environment, discrimination, gender debates, and civil union, though they do not necessarily express a reflexive attitude. Among the organized students, corruption and the lack of security for citizens mobilize their interests with a political emphasis; this is why it is possible to affirm that their participation in some protests allow them to activate their emotions and connect with other individuals, i.e., to move to a collective and effective experience (Castells, 2015; Quiroz, 2011).

The independent students form the most extensive group in the investigation. This is an interested section that fluctuates between confusion, interest, and fear but has a great potential that can be channeled not only by political institutions but also by the universities themselves. The concern for the problems of the country constitutes an opportunity for the university to capitalize the potential of its students, generating spaces for debate, a teaching pedagogy, and “a methodology that encourages curiosity, inquiry, cooperation” (Agudelo, 2015; Martínez, Silva, & Hernández, 2010), and also enables the formation of autonomous political proposals.

It was noted that issues encompassing the society, culture, and fields closest to their everyday concerns that interest the students, although they are not expressly political or permanently committed to political causes (Montoya, 2003; Alvarado, Ospina, Botero, & Muñoz, 2008). A small section mobilizes, but due to the actions’ sporadic nature, they do not necessarily imply a commitment on the students’ part.

The results set the ground for future research that can help establish a more accurate picture about the disposition of the university students toward political affairs. However, it is essential to discern between the position of men and that of women, now that the representation of women in international politics is increasing, such as Angela Merkel, Dilma Rousseff, Cristina Kirschner; in Peru, the Congress President, Luz Salgado; the vice president of the Republic, Mercedes Araoz, and other leaders are pointing out that there is a growing interest of women in exercising political leadership.

From another study perspective, with qualitative techniques, we could inquire about the relationship between the specialty (science or humanities) and the university students’ perception of political affairs.

The present study was limited to the city of Lima, Peru’s capital, a city in which the greatest amount of national resources are concentrated, both regarding infrastructure as well as services. This centralism is particularly in the field of education (López, 2005; Cuenca, 2015), engendering the necessity to clarify whether this situation of inequality has a correlation with the political practices of the university students in the other regions of Peru.

Authors such as López (2005) emphasize the role of the family in education, which sometimes conflicts with the school. One aspect that we have considered in this study is the role played by the family in the political convictions of young people, and how the university is configured as a catalyst for the previously acquired ideologies.

About the methods of inquiry, the stories of life constitute a convenient resource for exploring in depth the beliefs and motivations of the subjects.

The interest in conducting this research aligns with other studies in Latin America, and the similarity found among the results allows us to conclude that the need for the university, in response to the criticism of the students concerning politics, is to create a space for deliberation and public action, as part of the integral formation of the student body.

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