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# Mass Media Reform and Social Change: The Peruvian Experience<sup>1</sup>

By Rita Atwood and Sérgio Mattos

*Recent attempts at mass media reform in Peru provide a unique context for examining divergent views on the efficacy of structural media changes in national development efforts.*

In October of 1968, a military junta headed by General Juan Velasco Alvarado overthrew the Peruvian civil government of President Fernando Belaunde Terry. The “Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces” guided by Velasco Alvarado was dedicated to a transformation of Peruvian society – a transformation designed to promote the participation of vast numbers of lower socioeconomic class citizens in the national development process. Reorganization and redirection of the mass communication system in Peru became one a number of the central concerns of the Velasco Alvarado government, and a number of radical media reform strategies were implemented (12,26,33,36).

However, according to a number of critics, these media reform measures essentially failed to accomplish their objectives. They cite as evidence the shift of the military government of General Bermudez Morales in 1975 away from most reform strategies and the elimination by the civilian government of President Fernando Belaunde Terry of the important reform measures (29,36,38). While a definitive assessment of the successes and failures of media reforms initiated during the 1968-1975 period in Peru would be premature at this time, the Peruvian experiment does provide a valuable opportunity for the examination of various arguments regarding the role of mass media in revolutionary strategies.

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<sup>1</sup> Article first Page preview.