



**crisis states programme**

development research centre



Working Paper no.63

**DECONSTRUCTION WITHOUT  
RECONSTRUCTION?  
THE CASE OF PERU (1978-2004)**

**Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín**  
IEPRI  
Universidad Nacional de Bogotá

June 2005

Copyright © Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín, 2005

Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of material published in this Working Paper, the Crisis States Research Centre and LSE accept no responsibility for the veracity of claims or accuracy of information provided by contributors.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior permission in writing of the publisher nor be issued to the public or circulated in any form other than that in which it is published.

Requests for permission to reproduce this Working Paper, of any part thereof, should be sent to:  
The Editor, Crisis States Research Centre, DESTIN, LSE, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE.

**Crisis States Programme**  
**Working papers series no.1**

ISSN 1740-5807 (print)  
ISSN 1740-5815 (on-line)

Development  
**DESTIN**  
Studies Institute



## Crisis States Research Centre

### Deconstruction without Reconstruction? The Case of Peru (1978-2004)

Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín<sup>1</sup>  
IEPRI, Universidad Nacional de Colombia

“Let’s imagine a country of literati.”

(Alberto Fujimori)

“You can not argue with a chain reaction.”

(Deming)

#### Introduction

Alberto Fujimori had all the conditions to catch the eye of international analysts. He won the presidency of Peru in 1990 in a highly spectacular campaign, beating all rivals (and predictions). Doing so, he became the paradigm of antipolitics, a political style that in the 1990’s was able to win elections in several countries, including ones with very high per capita income. In this sense he was a pioneer, aware of the power of his innovation: when it came to his ears that he was being imitated all around the world he claimed wryly that he held “the copyright” of antipolitics.<sup>2</sup> In 1992 he closed the Congress, counting upon widespread support among the rich, the middle classes, and the poor.<sup>3</sup> Since, contrary to his campaign promises, he was implementing a very severe adjustment programme,<sup>4</sup> it seemed quite evident that he was expressing the old links between liberal economic policies, the rejection of the old political class (a rejection sometimes tagged as ‘neopopulism’), and antidemocratic tendencies.<sup>5</sup>

When Fujimori fell, all the democrats of the world sighed with relief, and the majority of them turned their eyes elsewhere. In doing so, they missed the equally important, though less flashy, second part of the story: antipolitics easily survived the fall of Fujimori, and continues to this day. If Fujimori showed that the preponderance of antipolitics and a critical undermining of the system of checks and balances *could* go hand-in-hand, his successors

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper forms part of the research project ‘Democratic sustainability in the Andean countries’, funded by the Crisis States Research Centre at the London School of Economics & Political Science. I wish to thank Notre Dame University, which awarded me a travel grant to carry out research in Peru.

<sup>2</sup> Julio Cotler, ‘Crisis políticas, outsiders y democraduras. El fujimorismo’, in Perelli *et al.* (eds), *Partidos y clase política en América Latina en los 90*, San José, Costa Rica: IIDH-Capel, 1995, pp.117-142.

<sup>3</sup> Martín Tanaka, ‘Los partidos políticos en el fujimorismo y los retos de su construcción’, in Marcelo Cavarozzi & Juan Aval Medina (eds), *El asedio a la política. Los partidos latinoamericanos en la era neoliberal*, Rosario, Argentina: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Homo Sapiens Editores, 2002, pp.317-348.

<sup>4</sup> Susan Stokes, ‘Democratic accountability and policy change: economic policy in Fujimori’s Peru’, *Comparative Politics* 29:2 (1997), pp.209-226.

<sup>5</sup> See Roberts, Kenneth, ‘Neoliberalism and the transformation of populism in Latin America: the Peruvian case’, *World Politics* 48 (1995), pp.82-116; and Bruce Kay, ‘Fujipopulism and the liberal state in Peru, 1990-1995’, *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 38:4 (1996), pp.55-98.

have demonstrated that it can also coexist with fully competitive elections. Furthermore, many of the themes, perceptions, and feelings that fed the Fujimori saga are still dominant in Peru's polity. According to a survey on political parties made by Lima University in 2003, only 16.3 percent of those interviewed admitted trusting the political parties, and 80.9 percent said they did not; political parties appeared as the least trusted institution, just behind judicial power. Only 21.6 percent of the sample trusted the Congress, against 76.1 percent that mistrusted it.<sup>6</sup> The result is that, from 2000 (the year Fujimori fell) on, we find an *increasing* party fragmentation (see Table 1), and extremely high levels of rejection of all things political.<sup>7</sup> The political system that was destroyed by Fujimori was not replaced by another one – nature perhaps does not tolerate a vacuum, but society apparently does.

**Table 1 - Electoral fragmentation (in seats) – Effective number of parties in Peru<sup>8</sup>**

<b>1978</b>	Constitutional Assembly - 4.44
<b>1980</b>	Lower House: 2.47 Senate: 3.42
<b>1985</b>	Lower House: 4.07 Senate: 5.33
<b>1990</b>	Lower House: 7.25 Senate: 7.6
<b>1992</b>	Congreso Constituyente Democrático (Fujimori's Constitutional Assembly): 5.27
<b>1995</b>	Unicameral congress: 2.91
<b>2000</b>	Unicameral congress: 3.81
<b>2001**</b>	6.64**

Source: Calculations based on Peru electoral en cifras, save 2001, where the source is the web page of the ONPE (Organización Electoral Peruana).

\*\* In votes

This in fact involves three questions. First, was the Peruvian political system actually destroyed by Fujimori? The answer is a definite yes. After the military gave back power to the civilians (1978-79), the political landscape was dominated by three main tendencies (Marxist left, the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA), and the centre-right) that collected more than 90% of the vote in each election. Now, they can muster no more than 40% of the votes between them, and only the APRA really survives as a stable party.<sup>9</sup> The politico-ecological balance that made possible the Peruvian democratic transition has long since disappeared.

<sup>6</sup> Martin Tanaka, 'Los partidos políticos en el Perú y la reforma política', mimeo, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> Which is not foreign to the good position of Fujimori in the opinion polls, despite his enormous corruption scandals.

<sup>8</sup> Unless stated otherwise, I present my calculations based on the extraordinary Fernando Tuesta Soldevilla, *Peru político en cifras 1821-2001*, Fiedrich Ebert Stiftung, Lima, 2001.

<sup>9</sup> *Acción Popular* (AP), another party of centre-right tendency, also subsists, but as a minor player.

Second, is the process of destruction of these groups so astonishing? Are we speaking about the demise of parties proper and of a real party system,<sup>10</sup> or about loose clientelistic structures with no real roots in society, that should have disappeared anyway? The answer is a qualified yes (yes, it is astonishing; yes, they were *bona fide* parties). The qualifications are obvious. Indeed, the democratic traditions of Peru are slim. From 1931 to 1980 there were only two peaceful, electorally regulated transfers of power. So the main procedure for the rotation of elites in the government was not elections. Even then, universal suffrage was severely restricted. Illiterates – the majority of the indigenous peoples – could not vote, and the 1932 Constitution incorporated a clause that prohibited the electoral participation of any party “affiliated to international organizations”, which in practice was directed against the biggest mass organisation (the APRA, that pretended to be a Latin American party), and possibly against the communists. When, in the midst of the democratic transition (DT), Peruvians were summoned to elect a Constitutional Assembly, their biggest political figure and the historical leader of the APRA, with more than 50 years of continental leadership, Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, cast for the first time in his life a vote; a commentator remarked with amazement that in a very real (democratic) sense, at his 83 years he was “a political virgin”.<sup>11</sup> But if this Matusalem ignored the meaning of competitive elections, at least he knew very well what was a sustained and highly organised and articulated effort to address the masses. His rivals could not say the same.<sup>12</sup> Lack of established traditions is an obvious source of weakness; building them may take long, and is a process always subject to reversals. Additionally, if in the 1990’s the Peruvian parties were wiped away – and without very high levels of repression – this means that they were not prepared to survive in the new conditions. But this Darwinian argument – related to Schumpeter’s proverbial “creative destruction” – fails to specify what the new conditions were, and what type of ‘adaptation failures’ they triggered. One of the rutinary claims about Latin American, and in general Third World, parties is that they are not grounded on social cleavages and, in general, constitute a messy web of shortsighted interests and appetites: an unruly bunch of tribes, to use Duverger’s imagery. Certainly, several Peruvian analysts of the 1980’s would apply precisely that description to their parties. However, as Tanaka has shown powerfully, the Peruvian situation was quite different: the DT parties expressed quite well key social and ideological cleavages and were highly organised;<sup>13</sup> there was a strong Marxist left, with a significant mass constituency; the APRA has been throughout its history an extremely strong and solid apparatus, making a conscious effort to insert the life of its members into the frame of its organisational routines; and, very much according to Duverger’s predictions, the centre-right parties found that the only way to compete in the public realm was to imitate and adopt the (successful) practices of organisation building and mass mobilisation of the APRA and the left.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, until the very end the political preferences processed by the political system expressed social cleavages quite neatly. In Table 2 it is shown that the Peruvians felt the Marxist left and the APRA tended to side with the poor (much more the first than the second) – they were ‘their’ parties, in the sense described by Lipset and Rokkan in the context of

---

<sup>10</sup> Giovanni Sartori, *Partidos y sistemas de partidos*, Alianza, Madrid, 2002. See Mainwaring’s discussion of Sartori and his adaptation to Latin America (Scott Mainwaring, *Rethinking party systems in the third wave of democratization. The case of Brazil*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1999).

<sup>11</sup> Luis Jochamowitz, *Ciudadano Fujimori. La construcción de un político*, Lima: PEISA, 1993, p.212.

<sup>12</sup> In this sense, the only Peruvian party that can reasonably be tagged as “traditional” is the APRA.

<sup>13</sup> Martín Tanaka, *Los espejismos de la democracia. El colapso del sistema de partidos en el Peru*, IEP, Lima, 1998.

<sup>14</sup> Maurice Duverger, *Les partis politiques*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1976.

developed countries.<sup>15</sup> More than 50 percent of those interviewed thought that the Marxist parties represented the lower classes, while less than 10 percent thought that the centre-right ones did.<sup>16</sup> According to Durand, the upper class of the capital, Lima, voted for the right wing PPC in 1985. Afterwards, possibly instigated by the significance of the Marxist threat, it turned to the APRA candidate, Alan García; but in the meantime the lower classes were dividing their vote between García (53.5% of their vote) and the left (31.3%).<sup>17</sup> All in all, the parties were well organised, the ideological differences between them were relatively clear, and voting patterns made sense, with both ideological and social divides more or less matched. So here we have a quandary. Why should the citizenship flock away from the organisations that were expressing tolerably well one of the the basic cleavages of their society? Why did they diverge so brusquely from the path predicted by Lipset and Rokkan: a freezing of the political system over those cleavages?<sup>18</sup> A listing of the alleged sins of the Peruvian parties does not answer this question, nor does it explain the radicality and suddenness of the collapse of the party system, and the persistence of its crisis. The big bang of the Peruvian political system should be interpreted as a representation of a crisis, not as a crisis of representation.

**Table 2 – Outcomes of democracy: political parties and class representation**

Answers to the following question: do you believe that this party represents the upper class, the middle class, or the lower class?

	<b>Libertad</b> %	<b>PPC</b> %	<b>AP</b> %	<b>APRA</b> %	<b>Cambio 90</b> %	<b>IS</b> %	<b>IU</b> %
<b>Upper class</b>	64.7	62.3	44.7	28.8	17.7	8	10.8
<b>Middle class</b>	12.7	16.7	30.3	29	43.2	21.2	25.2
<b>Low class</b>	2.7	1.7	4.5	12.2	13.5	24.8	32.3
<b>All of them</b>	2	1.8	2.5	5	6.3	1.7	2.2
<b>None</b>	4.3	4.7	5.8	13.3	5.2	13	12.7
<b>NA</b>	13.6	12.8	11.7	11.7	14.1	31.3	16.8
<b>Total</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: IMASEN, quoted in Fernando Tuesta Soldevilla, *Los enigmas del poder: Fujimori 1990-1996*, Fundación Fiedrich Ebert, Lima, Peru, 1997, p. 83

Third, is it true that there has not been a full-fledged recovery? Once again, the answer is a qualified yes. When full democratic competition was reinstated, the parties made a

<sup>15</sup> S. Lipset & S. Rokkan, 'Cleavage structures, party systems, and voter alignments: an introduction', in S. Lipset & S. Rokkan (eds), *Party systems and voter alignments: cross national perspectives*, New York: Free Press, 1967.

<sup>16</sup> See also Fernando Rospigliosi, 'Las elecciones peruanas de 1990', in Rodolfo Cerdas, Juan Rial and Daniel Zovato (eds), *Una tarea inconclusa*, San José, Costa Rica: IIDH-Capel-Fiedrich Nauman Stiftung, 1992.

<sup>17</sup> Durand, Francisco, 'El fenómeno Fujimori y la crisis de los partidos', *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 58:1 (1996), p.111.

<sup>18</sup> Please note that Rokkan's expectations cannot be dismissed as purely European. In Latin America, with the instability of its democratic institutions, the argument goes, we should expect other results. In fact, for almost all the cases analysed by Rokkan, democratic collapse and reversal in the process of universalisation of rights and entitlements were frequent.

comeback.<sup>19</sup> The APRA finally survived, and is still the main political force in Peru. The centre-right parties also resurrected, and they still play a certain role. After hitting bottom in 1995 (when all of them practically disappeared), some of the DT parties are back in the game. The post-Fujimori institutions have been manipulated, and will continue to be so, to strengthen the parties,<sup>20</sup> and this might have a certain positive effect. But this has been a feeble recovery, full of uncertainties. Table 1 already showed us that party fragmentation increased. The only old actor that really revived was the APRA – honouring its enthusiastic motto “*el APRA nunca muere*” (the APRA never dies) – but even then its recovery has been partial and may be insufficient to defeat non-party candidates. In 2001, the presidency was won by Alejandro Toledo, who ran in the name of *Perú Posible* (previously *País Posible*), precisely the type of vacuous tag that one would associate with antipolitics. Another main runner was Lourdes Florez, who spoke in the name of a broad front created by her centre-right party, which flirted openly with anti-politics. As seen above, the defining characteristics of the present situation are the very high levels of electoral fragmentation, the enormous discredit of politicians and parties, and the proliferation of small and short-lived political undertakings that, in the general ecology of politics, are a new species that compete successfully with the more stable, but clumsy, parties proper. Political actors have become mainly simple acronyms,<sup>21</sup> with no structure whatsoever (not even the tribal structure that Duverger had imagined), the epitome of this being the present president’s ‘party’, *Perú Possible*. Symptomatically, Fujimori – whose popularity still ranges high – has widespread sympathies, but no coherent force to support him; he has been “the victim of his own demolition job”, according to Tanaka’s witty comment.<sup>22</sup> The meaning of this for practical politicians is simple and brutal: established parties have, and will have, a very hard time trying to win the main electoral prize, the presidency. Since Peruvians elect – as all Latin Americans – their president through a run off system, a party such as the APRA with between 20 and 30 percent of the vote does not have the least chance to win if the bulk of independent voters support – as is likely – a coalition against it, giving the politicians incentives to denounce, or at least to distance themselves from, opaque party games.

A destruction process, thus, took place, and despite a fragile recovery of parties there are some basic continuities between the Fujimori period and today’s political system. This has hindered political stabilisation and consolidation. In the apt words of Dargent Bocanegra, “Peru’s [democratic] transition is interminable”.<sup>23</sup> This paper is devoted to the discussion of why the destruction took place, and why many of the traits of the demolition phase remained. It must be remembered that these are not trivial questions: several countries in Latin American and elsewhere have suffered very strong political and governance crises but have avoided the big bang of their political system. Indeed, increasingly there are signs of a general weakening of parties in many parts of the world,<sup>24</sup> but such weakening has different degrees and manifestations. Why did it take such a virulent form in Peru? Why have there

---

<sup>19</sup> Charles Kenney, ‘The death and rebirth of a party system. Peru 1978-2001’, *Comparative Political Studies*, 36:10 (2003), pp.1210-1239.

<sup>20</sup> Tanaka (2004).

<sup>21</sup> Carlos Vargas León, ‘El nuevo mapa político peruano: Partidos políticos, movimientos nacionales, e independientes’, *Documento de Trabajo* 103, Lima: IEP, 1999.

<sup>22</sup> Martín Tanaka, ‘Los partidos políticos en el Peru, 1992-1999. Estabilidad, sobrevivencia y política mediática’, *JCAS-IEP Documento de Trabajo* 108 (1999).

<sup>23</sup> Eduardo Dargent Bocanegra, ‘La transición interminable. Qué pasa con los partidos políticos en el Peru’, in Comisión Andina de Juristas, *Peru 2000: un triunfo de la democracia*, Lima: CAJ, 2000, pp.235-278.

<sup>24</sup> There is a growing literature about this topic. See, for example, Mark Blyth & Richard Katz, ‘From catch all politics to cartelisation: the political economy of the cartel party’, *West European Politics*, 28:1 (2005), pp.33-60.

been no signs of a clear improvement after Fujimori's regime fell? What does this tell us about other weakening processes elsewhere? To offer an answer, I will draw on two ideas. First, Rokkan's and Lipset's: stable political systems politicise a set of key political cleavages. They can do it obliquely, the cleavage can become fuzzy or tame with time, but parties keep on building on it. In that sense, parties and their key motives are always "older than their electorate".<sup>25</sup> Second, Duverger's notion of electoral competition. For Duverger, politics (or more exactly, universal suffrage politics) can be read as a technology to address mass constituencies in the right way. Duverger thought that, since manual workers were the densest populated niche in society, and the one that used more consistently its free time in politics, in a country where the rotation of political elites in power was regulated by universal suffrage, the working class parties had an ingrained technological advantage. They were able to *encadrer* (insert organisationally, and also defining their intellectual and cultural horizons) their members in a huge organisational network. This obliged *all* political forces to imitate those parties to try to survive: a "contagion to the left" (fascism is the best example of this). The contagion to the left could end up weakening democracy, giving a premium to forces that used its institutional universe (of which universal suffrage is a part) to undermine it.<sup>26</sup>

Putting both ideas together: the existence of a stable party system depends on three crucial capacities. The capacity to maintain a technological superiority over competitors and new potential entrants, the capacity to express over long periods preferences and expectations of relevant social niches, and the capacity to link both the best 'political technologies' available and the preferences of social groups to a concrete experience of government. I will try to show how, in these three senses, the Peruvian DT parties were critically undermined, and then discuss why the recovery has been so feeble.

In the first part of the paper, I claim that in some senses the Peruvian parties were very strong, and that this proved even more fatal for their survival chances than their (very real) weaknesses. The second part focuses on the consequences of Fujimori's demolition effort. The third one offers an interpretation of the trajectory of Peru's party system, and of its difficulties to recover after Fujimori's shock. I discuss, in a speculative fashion, the ways in which the Peruvian case can give us an understanding of party breakdown (or critical weakening) today. I suggest there that it is a result of an 'Escherian' type of politics: one based on the politicisation of the fracture between politics and society.

## **Organisational strength and the incumbent curse.**

### ***Strengths and weaknesses of the DT party system.***

In what sense can we say that parties are strong or weak? Mainwaring suggests that there are four basic dimensions of party strength: the stability of interparty competition measured through electoral volatility; the roots that parties have in society (measured, for example, through the degree of party identification, or the support to the given party in all electoral events); legitimacy; and the solidity of party organisations.<sup>27</sup> These four dimensions can be operationalised through two parameters: electoral volatility, measuring rootedness and stability; and organisational solidity. According to Table 3, the combination of moderate volatility and strong organisations is the normal case, both in the statistical and normative sense, while high electoral volatility and weak party structures is the situation typical of 'semi-

<sup>25</sup> Lipset & Rokkan (1967).

<sup>26</sup> Duverger (1976).

<sup>27</sup> Scott Mainwaring, 'Prologo', in Francisco Gutierrez (ed.), *Degradacion o cambio*, Bogotá: Norma, 2001, p.17.

democracies' (such as Fujimori's Peru) or of very incipient DT's. Two rare combinations remain: low volatility and weak organisations (for example, Colombia in the last three decades), and high volatility with strong organisations, a box that Mainwaring left empty. By what follows, it can be seen that Peru in the 1980's fits very well into that box.

**Table 3 - Peru in the 1980's. The missing link?**

	<b>Solid party organisations, moderate individualism.</b>	<b>Weak party organisations, very strong individualism.</b>
<b>Moderate electoral volatility</b>	Chile, Costa Rica, Honduras, Uruguay, virtually all the democracies of West Europe, United States, Japan	Colombia
<b>High electoral volatility</b>	<i>Peru in the 1980's</i>	Ecuador, Peru (after Fujimori), Russia, Venezuela from 1993

Source: Mainwaring (2001).

**Table 4 – 'Standard' volatility in Peru's national elections (in votes)**

<b>Period</b>	<b>President</b>	<b>Upper house</b>	<b>Lower house</b>	<b>Unicameral congress</b>
1980-1985	66.33%	67.66%	68.05%	---
1985-1990	67.65%*	65.66%	70.62%	---
1990-1995**	66.39%	---	---	---
1995-2000***	71.16%	---	---	---
2000-2001	65.27%*	---	---	50.17%

\* Calculations based on the the first round

\*\* Peru had a bicameral congress until 1990; from 1995 it is unicameral. Thus, the 1990-1995 parliamentary volatility can not be evaluated.

\*\*\* Such a high volatility in presidential elections in the 1990's may appear strange, given the stability of the vote for Fujimori. It must be remembered that the Table counts volatility regarding parties (or acronyms), not regarding individuals. Fujimori was sincerely antiparty, and in each election ran with a different acronym.

That the combination was actually there is not hard to see. I show in Table 4 that the levels of volatility were from the very beginning quite high, both for congressional and presidential elections. Additionally, Peru suffered the incumbent's curse: the governing president's party did not win the elections once. This continues today, as Toledo's government is quite discredited, with rates of approval in the last two years that range between a minimum of 6 percent and a maximum of 15 percent, and *Perú Posible* has not the least chance of winning the presidency, if it even decides to inscribe its own candidate. The incumbent's curse – a phenomenon that is found in an even stronger version in Ecuador – suggests a deep failure of governability: parties are not able to satisfy the expectations of their voters, or they even cheat them openly.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> As in the case of Fujimori, that Stokes analyses in detail (Stokes, 1997). Of course, cheating and disaffection are not necessarily associated: Fujimori enjoyed widespread support despite his doing precisely the contrary of what he had promised to do (and doing other things he had not hinted he had in mind, like closing the Congress), while presidents Belaúnde (1980-85), García (1985-90), and Toledo (2001- ), have kept their promises more or less faithfully and ended their periods completely compromised. The issue merits a more

At the same time, during Peru's DT, political organisation and mobilisation advanced in grand fashion. The 1978 Constitution had dropped the two big limitations to universal suffrage – giving vote to illiterates and accepting that parties with international affiliations could compete – and the process itself of the Constitutional Assembly allowed for a rapprochement between the APRA and the military, signaling clearly and publicly that the former would not intervene in case the latter won. Thus the 1978 Constitution created a new institutional universe, where the rotation of political elites in power was to be regulated by universal suffrage and competitive elections. The previous military regime had not been highly repressive, and instead engaged in a broad process of social reforms; the masses had both supported the reforms and mobilised against the conservative turn that the dictatorship took in its last years, playing a fundamental role in the democratisation of the country. Popular organisations thrived; they had been empowered through reforms and innumerable successful protests, and were strongly influenced by the Marxist left.

The effects of all this were immediate. Though in the first post-Constitution election, in 1980, a centre-right party surprisingly won the presidency, in part because the APRA went divided to the elections, in the 1983 subnational elections the APRA and the left had fully recuperated, and from then until Fujimori they won everything. In what sense were they superior alternatives? The APRA had a historical continuity, and it was the model according to which the Peruvians imagined what a party really was. According to Pablo Macera “in every small town in Peru there was “a police station, a Church, and an APRA locale”.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, Table 5 shows (according to one of Mainwaring's key criteria) that the APRA also got a substantial and stable portion of the vote at the subnational (departmental and municipal) levels.

**Table 5 - An alternative, “ecological”, measure of volatility in Peru's national elections**

Period	President	Upper house	Lower house	Unicameral congress
1980-1985	19.76%	36.65%	37.55%	
1985-1990	47.99%*	27.46%	60.53%	
1990-1995	34.45%**	--	--	No comparison possible
1995-2000	56.85%**	--	--	31.84%
2000-2001	48.15%**			38.55%

\*Taking into account that AP participated in FREDEMO, 35.02%

\*\* Calculations based on the first round

Internally, the APRA acted as a “total organization”, according to Cotler, whose obsession was to “encadrer” its members in a dense system of hierarchies and activities that would absorb all of their free time. Historical record and oral testimony show they were able to do this well. Full organisational insertion came hand-in-hand with a highly ideological

---

detailed study in a comparative perspective (in Ecuador, cheaters *are* punished, both in the streets and at the ballot box).

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Cynthia Anne Sanborn, *The democratic left and the persistence of populism in Peru: 1975-1990*, PhD thesis, Harvard University, 1991, p.275.

discourse that was simultaneously anti-oligarchic, anti-US, and anticommunist. Popular sectors were incorporated into the leadership.<sup>30</sup> The levels of party discipline were extremely high (and remain so even today). To the left came the panoply of Maoist, Trotskyist, and Gramscian organisations, that had several weaknesses in relation to the APRA. Although they could also claim to be following the teachings of an extraordinary national political thinker (José Carlos Mariátegui), they in reality did not count with their own political history and know-how, and were prone to ferocious factionalist bouts. In contrast to the APRA, they were trapped between an increasingly successful electoral participation and a revolutionary rhetoric that, at least in principle, was agnostic, in the optimistic version, in relation to democracy;<sup>31</sup> and indeed their performance in the Constitutional Assembly was in this regard rather ambiguous. On the other hand, the legal left had a strategic advantage over all the other political actors: its direct connection with the mass organisations that had been highly empowered both by the military and the democratisation process. In contrast, by the 1970s the APRA had already lost its grip on the trade unions, yielding to more radical organisations, and in the 1980s it campaigned in the name of unorganised workers. So despite its centrifugal tendencies, the Marxist left had very strong, militant, influential, and structured constituencies, which no doubt helps explain why, contrary to other countries, such tendencies could be tamed to the point that from 1983 on it achieved electoral unity (through a front called United Left).

We are thus faced here by a classical Duvergerian effect. The institutionalisation of universal suffrage empowers the groups that are able to address more effectively the bigger social (and electoral) niches. These groups develop sophisticated techniques to *encadrer* a mass constituency, but at the same time seek for active support among those groups willing and able to offer it: manual workers and popular sectors, who are more prone to use their free time in organisational life and social activism than others. In Peru in the 1980s we have circumstantial, but strong, evidence that precisely this was taking place. In the electoral realm, as seen above, the lower classes felt that the APRA and the left were nearer their hearts, and furthermore switched their support to one or the other, depending on the circumstances. For example, 60 percent of the people who voted for Alan García in 1985, backed the United Left candidate Alfonso Barrantes in 1986.<sup>32</sup> In terms of organisational development, the results were quite impressive: popular associations were mushrooming, and the majority of them had some kind of link with the left.<sup>33</sup> This prompted the APRA, and its dominant figure Alan García, to champion the cause of the unorganised workers,<sup>34</sup> which only fed the already overdeveloped and rather sectarian structures of the APRA.

In sum, apparently there were ideal conditions for two (interconnected) Duvergerian phenomena to take place:

1. A gradual organisational build up of *all* political competitors, triggered by a learning process (people imitate winners);

---

<sup>30</sup> Nearly 30% of all leaders were manual workers, according to an estimate in Liisa North & Jacques Doyer, *Social composition and ideological orientations of Peru's APRA party leadership. Implications for the García presidency*, Toronto: Center for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean, York University, 1993.

<sup>31</sup> And this in a decade where a Maoist guerrilla, Shinning Path, was seriously challenging the State.

<sup>32</sup> Pedro Planas, *La democracia volátil. Movimientos, partidos, líderes políticos y comportamientos electorales en el Peru contemporáneo*, Lima: Fiedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2000.

<sup>33</sup> Henry Dietz, 'Electoral politics in Peru 1978-1986', *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* (1986), pp.139-163.

<sup>34</sup> Sanborn (1991).

2. A leftist contagion, due to two facts: a) the working class left (both in the social-democrat and communist versions) has the know-how to *encadrer* its members and supporters; and b) its supporters are more prone to use their free time in politics. The existence of a leftist contagion *does not* mean that all parties drift towards the ideological left (indeed, it can involve an acute polarisation), but that all the parties imitate the techniques (a large scale organisational and ideological effort, and the identification of social niches open to it ) and discourses of the left to compete successfully with it.

But then came an earthquake – or what Peruvian commentators aptly called a tsunami.

### ***You do not debate with a chain reaction***

Although the term ‘tsunami’ is applied to Fujimori’s political revolution, in reality the tsunami preceded Fujimori, and helped him up, as it were, to the presidency. The tsunami was basically the boomerang effect of the leftist contagion, and more generally of the political equilibrium arrived at by the 1978 arrangements. Why was this reaction so successful (a chain reaction, indeed), and why did it take the form it took? Possibly three crucial factors came into play. First, a chronic failure of governability. This we know for sure. It is not only the existence of the incumbent curse, but the fiasco of the Alan García government. García was not only a charismatic leader, who won the presidency by a landslide and obtained implausible levels of approval at the beginning of his government (more than 90 percent), he was also the first APRA president in Peruvian history. He represented all that the 1978 Constitution meant: the lifting of the military veto on the APRA, and the inclusion of the popular sectors. He also represented very well the contagion to the left: though, for historical reasons, a formal alliance between the United Left and the APRA never came to fruition, García pushed through a programme that included the nationalisation of the banks, and from the beginning of his career he was a member of the APRA wing that insisted on taming down anticommunism and underscoring social reform. But after a promising beginning, García’s government headed for disaster. The overall balance of his administration is awful: hyperinflation, economic catastrophe, and unending corruption scandals.<sup>35</sup> Now APRA was *the* alternative to normal politics (represented by the previous government, that had also failed). What was left?

Then comes organisational hypertrophy. By definition, parties offer club goods: i.e. they depend on their capacity to exclude others.<sup>36</sup> Privileged access, though – particularly when it is organised and produced openly and massively – may generate widespread rejection, and a demand for unmediated participation.

Third, electronic media, and especially television, possibly affected the ecology of highly organised parties on two accounts. On the one hand, it became one of the main uses of free time – perhaps the main one, undermining the allure of politics and in general of plebeian associational life. This must have started earlier, but only manifested itself clearly in the late 1980s. On the other, it gave individual politicians – and potential entrants – the possibility to address the masses over the heads, so to say, of the organisations. So voluntary work (the alpha and omega of ‘old politics’) became *simultaneously* scarcer and less important. It is difficult to find hard data supporting these conjectures, but there are instead plenty of

---

<sup>35</sup> Paradoxically, also human rights scandals. It must be remembered that García was facing a quite brutal challenge by the Shining Path guerrilla.

<sup>36</sup> I lean here on Weber’s venerable definition of a political party.

symptoms. In 1989, Ricardo Belmont (owner of a TV and radio enterprise)<sup>37</sup> was elected mayor of Lima. He ran on an antipolitical platform, and declared that his candidacy was “totally independent and alien to any party ideology or catchword”.<sup>38</sup> Thus, for the first, but not the last, time TV showed that it was able to defeat the parties.<sup>39</sup> The core of campaigning, which before had involved meetings and marches, now “increasingly depended on the capacity of expression of the mass media”.<sup>40</sup> Making a career within a political organisation and casting well in TV involve two completely different sets of skills, so party leaders had an objective barrier to adapt to the new mode of doing things.

Thus by the second half of the 1980s, the DT party system was in the midst of a leftist contagion and an organisational buildup. This empowered parties that knew very well how to encadrer the masses, but instead did not have any governmental experience. The combination of government failure, technological change, and resistance to partitocracy, proved fatal for the party system. It was victim both of its weaknesses (government failures), and of its strengths (organisational hypertrophy). Thus in 1990, parties – still by far and large the main political entities – were totally discredited. According to Tanaka:

in a 1990 survey, only 5% of the interviewed believed the parties represented their interests. In a 1 to 7 trust scale, the interviewed gave parties and congress a mark of 3.31 and 3.24 respectively, the lowest marks among all institutions.<sup>41</sup>

In another poll, carried out later among the popular sectors of the capital, 94 percent of those interviewed declared their agreement with the following sentence: “people have always been deceived by politicians”.<sup>42</sup> In this second case, we find a clear association between antipolitical and nondemocratic attitudes. 81 percent of those interviewed manifested their agreement with “a just non-elected government ...that would improve the situation”.<sup>43</sup> The isolation of the party system expressed a rupture between politics and society,<sup>44</sup> and a fracture between the electoral and public opinion realms.<sup>45</sup>

The simultaneous breakdown of García’s government and of the legitimacy of the party system opened wide the door to new entrants. It offered two new big themes to politicians:

---

<sup>37</sup> On a much more modest scale, Fujimori was anchorman of a government TV programme dedicated to agricultural themes.

<sup>38</sup> Carlos Reyna, *La anunciación de Fujimori. Alan García, 1985-1990*, Lima: Desco, 2000, p.238.

<sup>39</sup> There is a potentially crucial fourth variable, the informalisation of labour (for the more general argument, DiJohn, personal communication; for the Peruvian case, Kenney 2003). I will not explore this avenue here, though once again there is plenty of circumstantial evidence to support it.

<sup>40</sup> Tanaka (1998), p.180.

<sup>41</sup> Tanaka (1998), p.223.

<sup>42</sup> Luis Pásara, ‘Cuando los políticos fracasan’, *Perfiles Liberales* 31 (1993), p.38.

<sup>43</sup> A majority also declared its preference for democracy over any other form of government. But, as seen above, they held a non-standard notion of democracy: they could define it as a government of a benevolent leader. Interpreters of opinion polls are seldom aware of these inconsistencies, and hail with alacrity any verbal majority that supports democracy.

<sup>44</sup> Raúl Mendoza Cánepa, ‘¿Hacia nuevos partidos políticos?’, in Comisión Andina de Juristas, *Perú 2000: un triunfo sin democracia*, Lima: Comisión Andina de Juristas, 2000, pp.345-391.

<sup>45</sup> Tanaka (1998).

1. The defense of liberal economic principles and programmes as a way of saving Peru from its crisis, *and* redeeming the masses; from the very beginning neoliberals incorporated a popular dimension in their programme;<sup>46</sup>
2. The denunciation of parties, i.e. antipolitics.

What deserves to be noted – and what explains Fujimori’s victory – is that it took time to put these two themes together. Antipoliticians could get good results, as Belmont was showing. But in the presidential campaign of 1990, liberals that were opposing García strongly gathered around a standard party front, FREDEMO (Front for Democracy), headed by Mario Vargas Llosa, the famous writer. FREDEMO was a bizarre alloy of ‘old’ (party) and ‘new’ mediatic politics, as symbolised by the fact the the right wing parties had been able to coincide only on a typically mediatic name. On the other hand, FREDEMO was managed and staged by the parties that composed it, and was extremely ideological. Vargas held strong liberal convictions, and saw that his key motives – antistatism, liberty and the need for a decisive liberal shock – became the axes of his campaign. Ideology was above pragmatic considerations, and for ideology Vargas took several steps detrimental to his electoral performance.<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, FREDEMO was not much more than a gigantic *mise en scène*, a mediatic operation that paid much more attention to TV advertisements than to mass organisation and mobilisation.<sup>48</sup> Vargas, torn apart between his ideological convictions (that suggested to him that strong parties were the correct thing, given that they were part of the organisational landscape of the democratic West), and the evidences that showed him that the presence of parties in his electoral undertaking would subtract, not add, votes, symbolised the transitional character of FREDEMO.

Fujimori was not hampered by ideological convictions, and following standard Downsian logics he searched for the centre and avoided major confrontations with his rivals. He toned down the necessity of a liberal shock, and called for national unity. Against all the odds, he ended up defeating his famous rival.<sup>49</sup> This allowed him to switch programmes, become a staunch neoliberal, and link the major motives of liberal policies and antipolitics that until then had been separated.

### ***The demolition job: the rebellion of society against politics.***

Once in government, Fujimori denounced the “dictatorship of partitocracy”.<sup>50</sup> Parties, he said in 1992:

have become an electoral machine, that penetrate other organisations to politicise them unnecessarily, distorting the spirit of democracy. Peruvian political parties behave as a big oligopoly of political decision and manipulation. What is being

---

<sup>46</sup> Neoliberalism had a programme for the popular sectors: informality and deregulation (Reyna, 2000, p.223). The most prominent ideologue of this tendency was Hernando de Soto, who created an influential think tank.

<sup>47</sup> For example, FREDEMO produced an advertisement of a monkey shitting on the country – it was supposed that it represented bureaucrats. The monkey image triggered a violent debate, and heated passions against FREDEMO and Vargas himself (Jeff Daeschner, *The war of the end of democracy. Mario Vargas Llosa vs. Alberto Fujimori*, Lima: Peru Reporting, 1993).

<sup>48</sup> There are detailed descriptions of the 1990 campaign; see, for example, the highly intelligent and amusing Daeschner (1993).

<sup>49</sup> With the support of the APRA and the left, who had been insulted ferociously by Vargas, and who believed that Fujimori was the lesser evil.

<sup>50</sup> Carlos Fernández, ‘Democracia, Fujimori y los partidos políticos’, *Ideéle*, 71-72, pp.95-98.

discussed in Peru is not the existence of democracy, but the dictatorship of partitocracy.<sup>51</sup>

Fujimori's demolition job had a rapid success. By the 1995 elections (which that year were relatively competitive),<sup>52</sup> for all practical purposes the DT parties had disappeared. None of them exceeded the threshold of 5 percent of the valid votes that the Jurado Nacional de Elecciones demanded to maintain their legal recognition as a party.<sup>53</sup> Table 6 shows eloquently the itinerary of such a disaster. The most affected force was by far and large the Marxist left, but the rightist groupings also received heavy blows.

**Table 6 – Evolution of the vote for system parties and the independents 1978-1995**

Period	Votes for the main system parties (S) (%)	Vote for independent candidates (I) (%)	Valid Votes (%)
1978©	88	12	84
1980(p)	98	2	78
1980(m)	92	8	85
1983(m)	93	7	82
1985(p)	97	3	86
1986(m)	92	8	85
1989(m)	72	28	78
1990(p)*	68	32	85
1992©	16	84	76
1993(m)	34	66	75
1995(p)	7	93	82
1995 (m)	5	95	82
1998(m)	12	88	87
2000(p)*	2	98	92
2001(p)*	26	74	86

Source: Based on Tanaka, 1998, p. 55 and Tuesta (2001)

© Constitutional Assembly. In 1992, elections to create a constitutional democratic congress.

(m). Municipal Elections.

(p). Presidential Elections.

(S). System parties include AP, PPC, APRA and the left. In 1978, the left is the sum of FOCEP, PSR, PCR, PCP, and UDP. In the 1980 presidentials, it is the sum of PRT, UNIR, UI, UDP, and FOCEP. In the 1980 and 1986 municipals, left is Izquierda Unida- United Left. In 1989, IU and ASI. In 1990, the sum of IU and IS; in 1992, MDI; in 1993, the sum of IU and MDI; in 1995, IU.

(I) Sum of the votes of independents and small parties.

The demolition of the 'party dictatorship' was associated, first of all, with a radical centralisation of power: "In Peru there are not political parties. I am the power, that is the truth. But this is a power given to me by the people. I represent them";<sup>54</sup> "The depth of the

<sup>51</sup> Aldo Panfichi & Cynthia Sanborn, 'Democracia y neopopulismo en el Peru contemporáneo', *Márgenes*, 13/14 (November 1995), p.97.

<sup>52</sup> Tanaka (2002).

<sup>53</sup> Tanaka (1998), p.53.

<sup>54</sup> Tanaka (1998), p.55.

pit is such ...that it would be convenient for an Emperor to spend at least ten years solving problems".<sup>55</sup> Checks and balances, thus, were gone. But Fujimori also was intent on creating new realities, a new style of government that, as had to be, adopted and adapted experiences from the past. He claimed to incorporate the popular sectors through direct democracy. His 1993 Constitution conferred broad opportunities for its exercise.<sup>56</sup> According to Seldon, "Fujimori's political survival strategy combines the seemingly contradictory elements of exclusion at the national level and inclusion at the local level".<sup>57</sup> Direct democracy was supported through the generous use of television, which offered Fujimori the possibility of addressing very wide constituencies without the semblance of an organisation independent of the state, and of producing a powerful set of icons that allowed for the symbolic inclusion of the popular sectors.<sup>58</sup>

But none of these slick manoeuvres would have been successful if Fujimori had not been able to solve the issue of government performance. According to Kenney, his first critical decision was to govern with the international financial community.<sup>59</sup> As was seen above, Fujimori implemented the neoliberal shock that Vargas could only promise, and also defeated the Shining Path guerrilla. In doing so, he was able to present himself as an antipolitical statesman, intent only on administration,<sup>60</sup> thus restating governance in terms of management. His was a government of valence issues, not of confrontational ones (the matter of politicians). It is a paradox (ugly, but interesting) that the only period in which Peru escaped the incumbent's curse was during the ten ruthless and undemocratic Fujimori years.

## **Post-Fujimorism.**

### ***The evolution of volatility***

What kind of political landscape has followed Fujimori's fall? Let us start by considering volatility. Volatility is a critical problem for Peru, and its evolution shows nicely the continuities and changes of the present situation in relation to the Fujimori decade.

Table 4, which displays the evolution of volatility as it is operationalised by political scientists (essentially the count of the number of voters that change their mind in two consecutive contests) shows a story of continuity at very high levels. Fujimori's refusal to attach his name to any stable tag, and the incumbent curse in the previous years, guarantee that during all the period considered in this paper presidential volatility was above 60 percent. Basically the same happened with the Congress. Table 5 (with a non-standard, extremely

---

<sup>55</sup> Charles Kenney, 'Por qué el autogolpe? Fujimori y el congreso 1990-1992', in Tuesta Fernando (ed.), *Los enigmas del poder. Fujimori 1990-1996*, Lima: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 1997, p.94.

<sup>56</sup> Panfichi & Sanborn (1995).

<sup>57</sup> Jessica Seldon, *Puzzling participation: a new authoritarianism in Peru*, PhD thesis, Harvard University, 1997, p.1.

<sup>58</sup> He even created a TV character, El Chinito (The Little Chinaman), which he incarnated whenever necessary: "I have become popular with him, I even quote him in my speeches" (Fujimori, quoted in Jochamowitz, 1993, p.15).

<sup>59</sup> Kenney (1997). Kenney also shows that the first serious breach of democratic practices by Fujimori occurred when he short circuited the Congress in a process of approval of an anti-drug treaty with the United States. After Fujimori closed the congress, the US and other international actors put a kind of pressure on Fujimori that could be called optimal: sufficiently strong so as to prevent his autocratic tendencies to develop into an openly repressive dictatorship, and sufficiently gentle so as not to destabilise him.

<sup>60</sup> Fujimori was an engineer, a fact that he utilised in the building of his public image. One of his preferred readings – and he boasted that it had been one of his intellectual referents during his electoral campaign – was the Deming management manual.

simple, measure of volatility) shows a somewhat different story. Here volatility adopts an ‘ecological’ flavour: how many votes went for tags that appeared or disappeared in two consecutive elections? The table offers us a nice surprise: this kind of volatility increased brusquely *after* the first, teluric, stage of DT, and stabilised there. Way more than one third of the votes go to short-lived actors. The ‘freezing’ of the political system never took place, and instead disposable tags have replaced parties proper. This is more so if one considers that, after the fall of Fujimori, the incumbent curse returned with full force.

### *The APRA*

What has happened to the APRA is also a critical issue. The APRA is *the* expression through which Peruvians acquired the knowledge of what a party is.<sup>61</sup> Any Peruvian aspirant to be called a party must compete with the APRA. Indeed, the APRA weathered Fujimori’s tsunami better than any other DT party; it had impressive assets to do so, and as Kenney and others note, it is once again fully in the game.<sup>62</sup> However, its status has changed in several important ways.

**Table 7 A- APRA vote at the departmental level**

	1963*	1966*	1980	1986	1989	1993	1998	2002
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Amazonas	56.42	50.37	40.37	67.39	30.34	17.26	0.42	20.6
Ancash	48.79	48.01	31.62	58.46	44.24	29.53	9.04	27.54
Apurímac	48.83	46.5	19.53	55.74	11.87	10.9	—	
Arequipa	24.09	36.6	8.29	35.17	10.85	0	1.43	31
Ayacucho	41.9	42.48	18.76	56.6	24.55	8.68	4.61	22.96
Cajamarca	62.91	55.66	45.38	69.42	35.14	18.73	4.81	23.66
Callao	32.79	39.75	22.38	49.39	31.89	7.76	5.09	24.11
Cusco	31.33	37.94	16.05	57.51	15.17	4.57	4.45	15.181
Huancavelica	47.16	45.94	11.52	54.62	13.18	5	2.08	7.13
Huanuco	48.78	50.98	33.44	59.46	24.63	10.75	4.6	10.53
Íca	47.02	40.92	19.15	42.85	27.27	22.44	10.27	32.15
Junín	35.96	50.71	13.15	51.98	11.69	3.18	1.59	20.2
La Libertad	72.91	68.59	62.12	68.03	56.48	54.63	39.17	50.89
Lambayeque	63.62	0	45.9	58	34.4	35.2	14.11	29.44
Limaprov.	38.34	42.23	17	52.18	23.26	15.91	4.59	36.24
Loreto	43.43	39.97	30.93	43.46	20.97	6.87	1.85	
Madre de Dios	53.43	53.98	28.54	46.87	29.92	25.24	3.28	19.59
Moquegua	39.36	51.59	13.89	47.96	22.08	2.54	—	13.74
Pasco	39.36	48.54	21.16	53.62	18.14	5.07	—	17.25
Piura	39.45	44.69	25.63	44.18	28.7	21.97	1.92	28.25
Puno	11.85	14.07	4.62	52.74	11.97	3.44	2.06	
San Martín	52.78	47.84	36.04	59.44	25.7	18.1	5.67	22.84
Tacna	37.99	57.12	8.13	38.31	23.23	1.27	2.41	29.13
Tumbes	46.8	44.79	25.38	38.99	27.11	24.71	0.93	19.28
Ucayali			19.33	63.06	21.69	5.09	1.59	24.11

Source: Tuesta (1997), complemented by the ONPE web page\*

<sup>61</sup> See, for example, Heraclio Bonilla & Paul Drake, *El APRA: de la ideología a la praxis*, Lima: Centro Latinoamericano de Historia Económica y Social, Editorial y Productora Gráfica Nuevo Mundo, 1989.

<sup>62</sup> Kenney (2003).

**Table 7 B – APRA’s votes stability at the municipal elections**

	APRA	ACCIÓN POPULAR	IZQUIERDA UNIDA	FRENTE DEMOCRATICO	FNTC	CAMBIO 90	VAMOS VECINO	P. POPULAR CRISTIANO
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1963*	44	47	--	--	--	--	--	--
1966*	43	46	--	--	--	--	--	--
1980	22	36	23	--	--	--	--	11
1983	33	17	29	--	--	--	--	14
1986	47	--	31	--	--	--	--	14
1989	20	--	18	32	--	--	--	--
1993	12	13	4	--	3	--	--	5
1995		5	--	--	0	19	--	0
1998	7	5	--	--	1	--	25	--

\*In 1963 Y 1966, Apra participated in coalition with UNO (*Unión Nacional Odríista*) and AP participated with DC

First of all, the APRA is no longer a party that fulfills Mainwaring’s criteria of strength, as Tables 7A and 7B show. Aggregating nationally the municipal votes, it is seen that APRA’s share has declined steadily, falling below 10% (Table 7B). At the departmental level, APRA had bastions where it was invincible (‘the solid north’), and in every department, with few and marginal exceptions, caught a substantial portion of the vote. Presently, it has virtually disappeared in some departments, and even in the solid north it has suffered a substantial decline (Table 7A).<sup>63</sup> Not as strong as before, though, is not the same as irrelevant. The APRA still captures one third of the preferences in national (congressional and presidential) elections and is highly organised. But at this level it confronts a major obstacle: governance. Given the record of García’s administration, any triumph in the first round is likely to trigger a mobilisation of everybody against the APRA in the second. Furthermore, even if it wanted, the APRA can not govern as it did in the late 1980s. What can it offer, apart from management? And what strategy can it craft to come back to power, despite the rebuttal of parties by more than two-thirds of the Peruvians?<sup>64</sup>

### Escherian patterns?

Now we can see easily what *all* Peruvian politicians, from Belmont on, continuing with Fujimori, and ending with Toledo, have in common: since politics is discredited, they have strong incentives to denounce it to win elections. Said in the terms of Lipset and Rokkan, they have to politicise the (stable) fracture between politics of society. This is Escherian politics indeed (politics about, and against, politics). While the old leaders were engaged in a system of nested games – trying to defeat their adversaries within the party apparatus, and at the same time gaining the support of the voters<sup>65</sup> – a new species of candidate appeared that learnt how to minimise the weight of the apparatus and profit from valence issues (growth,

<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, in the golden years of Fujimorism, some of the main APRA departments switched to Fujimori. Some of the 1995 results are the following: : Amazonas, Fujimori (Cambio 90) took 65.26% of the vote, in Cajamarca 74.75%, in La Libertad 57.21%, In Lambayeque 62.27%, in Madre de Dios 62.23%, in San Martín 63.36%, and in Ucayali 76.57% (Fujimori nationally captured 64% of the valid votes).

<sup>64</sup> In 2004, the APRA for the first time in its history decided to create an electoral front to summon a broad alliance that would take it to power.

<sup>65</sup> Tanaka (1998).

stability, and crucially the rejection of corrupt and incompetent politicians);<sup>66</sup> and the Fujimori experience taught them that television was the best technological device for addressing the voters.<sup>67</sup> Why could this happen? Basically, because the process of party system creation that was taking place in Peru crashed against extremely hostile conditions (in part created by the parties themselves). The impossibility of establishing a social democratic pact – as García’s government showed – and of sustaining a model of party building based on mass-street mobilisation and organisational insertion, halted brusquely the Duvergerian contagion drive and triggered a new one, characterised by organisational entropy. Big organisations get in the way of successful candidates, because they are increasingly redundant, because they are an inevitable source of internal disputes, but especially because they give the wrong signal: isolation and distinctness *vis-à-vis* ‘civil society’ and the ‘common man’. To be successful, candidates have to show their transparency and independence. Besides, free time is used consuming television. No politician, not even those who enthusiastically demand the need for strong parties, can ignore the terms and trends of this cycle of contagion.<sup>68</sup>

All this helps to specify the legacy of the Fujimori period and the reasons for its persistence. What Fujimori did was to politicise the fracture between politics and society, a Escherian cleavage, linking it to a specific form of governance (what I call elsewhere semidemocracy).<sup>69</sup> The Escherian cleavage is still the main one, but political actors have strong incentives as well – given international constraints and the catastrophic end of Fujimori’s regime – to delink it from semi-democracy. Said in other terms, there is a more or less conscious effort to separate antipolitical discourse and practices from semidemocratic governance (to which it was initially strongly connected).<sup>70</sup> The Escherian cleavage is riddled by internal inconsistencies: politics against politics, mainly.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, some of the most cherished themes of Fujimori were part of the discourse and programmes of the international mode of governance (direct democracy, transparency), and were taken directly from that repertoire, so they are a strong focal point. What Peruvian politicians are doing is wording such themes in a way that is compatible with fully competitive politics (but not necessarily with strong party structures). Thus the Escherian cleavage is not a proper base for the foundation of a stable political system. Tags come and go, but stable patterns (chronic organisational instability) far from equilibrium remain. This puts a heavy burden on democracy, which needs – at least until the contrary is demonstrated – working parties. If in the midst of the Duvergerian cycle the threat party dynamics posed on democracy was excess of organisation – which implied a totalizing trend – in the antipolitical cycle the dynamics

---

<sup>66</sup> See Kurt Weyland, ‘La paradoja del éxito? Los determinantes del apoyo político al presidente Fujimori’, *Sociología* 25 (2000), pp.213-244. A very good symptom of this is that presently there is a broad discussion in Peru, the main motive of which is the opening of the political system (Tanaka, 2004). Despite the complete destruction of partitocracy, its shadow still looms large.

<sup>67</sup> But the only one, though even anti-TV techniques relied on direct contact, not on highly developed organisational structures.

<sup>68</sup> The first symptoms of the cycle may have had early manifestations. As candidate, Alan Garcia wanted to change the party structures and promote a rapprochement to civil society (Sanborn, 1991, p.109). As president, he tried to move his party away from governmental decisions.

<sup>69</sup> Francisco Gutiérrez, ‘Fragile democracy and schizophrenic liberalism: exit, voice, and loyalty in the Andes’, *International Political Science Review*, 26:1 (2005), pp.125-139.

<sup>70</sup> Maxwell Cameron, ‘Self coups: Peru, Guatemala, and Russia’, *Journal of Democracy*, 9:1 (1998), pp.125-138.

<sup>71</sup> But not only. It would not be exaggerated to say that regarding politics Latin America’s modernisation effort is full of (at least partially) inconsistent demands. Candidates, for example, can blame ‘politicians’ for their failure to build strong parties, and then a personalist and antipolitical campaign in the name of the need of strengthening and modernising the political system.

pose the inverse danger: organisational entropy. After all, democracy *is* about politics. As Carey notes, in Peru a conflict between transparency and (the possibility) of collective action is taking place.<sup>72</sup>

In this sense, the Peruvian experience is not so extraordinary. In several Latin American countries the fracture between politics and society took place, more or less in the same period, and it offered political entrepreneurs incentives to politicise it. In Peru this fracture was particularly deep because of the strength of the previous Duvergerian cycle and the lack of governmental experience of the democratic parties. All the other consequences follow.

---

<sup>72</sup> John Carey, 'Transparency versus collective action: Fujimori's legacy and the Peruvian congress', *Comparative Political Studies* 36:9 (2003), pp.983-1006.

## References

- Blyth, Mark and Katz, Richard, 'From catch all politics to cartelisation: the political economy of the cartel party', *West European Politics*, 28:1 (2005), pp.33-60
- Bonilla, Heraclio and Drake, Paul, *El APRA: de la ideología a la praxis*, Lima: Centro Latinoamericano de Historia Económica y Social, Editorial y Productora Gráfica Nuevo Mundo, 1989
- Cameron, Maxwell, 'Self coups: Peru, Guatemala, and Russia', *Journal of Democracy*, 9:1 (1998), pp.125-138
- Carey, John, 'Transparency versus collective action: Fujimori's legacy and the Peruvian congress', *Comparative Political Studies* 36:9 (2003), pp.983-1006
- Cotler, Julio, 'Crisis políticas, outsiders y democraduras. El fujimorismo', in Carina Perelli, Sonia Picado and Daniel Zovatto (eds), *Partidos y clase política en América Latina en los 90*, San José, Costa Rica: IIDH-Capel, 1995, pp.117-142
- Daeschner, Jeff, *The war of the end of democracy. Mario Vargas Llosa vs. Alberto Fujimori*, Lima: Peru Reporting, 1993
- Dargent Bocanegra, Eduardo, 'La transición interminable. Qué pasa con los partidos políticos en el Peru', in Comisión Andina de Juristas, *Peru 2000: un triunfo de la democracia*, Lima: CAJ, 2000, pp.235-278
- Dietz, Henry, 'Electoral politics in Peru 1978-1986', *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* (1986), pp.139-163
- Durand, Francisco, 'El fenómeno Fujimori y la crisis de los partidos', *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 58:1 (1996), pp.97-120
- Duverger, Maurice, *Les partis politiques*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1976
- Fernández, Carlos, 'Democracia, Fujimori y los partidos políticos', *Ideéle*, 71-72 (1994), pp.95-98
- Gutiérrez, Francisco, 'Fragile democracy and schizophrenic liberalism: exit, voice, and loyalty in the Andes', *International Political Science Review*, 26:1 (2005), pp.125-139
- Jochamowitz, Luis, *Ciudadano Fujimori. La construcción de un político*, Lima: PEISA, 1993
- Kay, Bruce, 'Fujipopulism and the liberal state in Peru, 1990-1995', *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 38:4 (1996), pp.55-98
- Kenney, Charles, 'Por qué el autogolpe? Fujimori y el congreso 1990-1992', in Tuesta Fernando (ed.), *Los enigmas del poder. Fujimori 1990-1996*, Lima: Fiedrich Ebert Stiftung, 1997, pp.75-104
- Kenney, Charles, 'The death and rebirth of a party system. Peru 1978-2001', *Comparative Political Studies*, 36:10 (2003), pp.1210-1239
- Lipset, S. and Rokkan, S., 'Cleavage structures, party systems, and voter alignments: an introduction', in S. Lipset and S. Rokkan (eds), *Party systems and voter alignments: cross national perspectives*, New York: Free Press, 1967
- Mainwaring, Scott, *Rethinking party systems in the third wave of democratization. The case of Brazil*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1999

- Mainwaring, Scott, 'Prologo', in Francisco Gutierrez (ed.), *Degradacion o cambio*, Bogotá: Norma, 2001, pp.3-21
- Mendoza Cánepa, Raúl, '¿Hacia nuevos partidos políticos?', in Comisión Andina de Juristas, *Perú 2000: un triunfo sin democracia*, Lima: Comisión Andina de Juristas, 2000 pp.345-391
- North, Liisa and Doyer, Jacques, *Social composition and ideological orientations of Peru's APRA party leadership. Implications for the García presidency*, Toronto: Center for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean, York University, 1993
- Panfichi, Aldo and Sanborn, Cynthia, 'Democracia y neopopulismo en el Peru contemporáneo', *Márgenes*, 13/14 (November 1995), pp.43-70
- Pásara, Luis, 'Cuando los políticos fracasan', *Perfiles Liberales* 31 (1993), pp.31-43
- Planas, Pedro, *La democracia volátil. Movimientos, partidos, líderes políticos y comportamientos electorales en el Peru contemporáneo*, Lima: Fiedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2000
- Reyna, Carlos, *La anunciación de Fujimori. Alan García, 1985-1990*, Lima: Desco, 2000
- Roberts, Kenneth, 'Neoliberalism and the transformation of populism in Latin America: the Peruvian case', *World Politics* 48 (1995), pp.82-116
- Rospigliosi, Fernando, 'Las elecciones peruanas de 1990', in Rodolfo Cerdas, Juan Rial and Daniel Zovato (eds), *Una tarea inconclusa*, San José, Costa Rica: IIDH-Capel-Fiedrich Nauman Stiftung, 1992
- Sanborn, Cynthia Anne, *The democratic left and the persistence of populism in Peru: 1975-1990*, PhD thesis, Harvard University, 1991
- Sartori, Giovanni, *Partidos y sistemas de partidos*, Alianza, Madrid, 2002
- Seldon, Jessica, *Puzzling participation: a new authoritarianism in Peru*, PhD thesis, Harvard University, 1997
- Stokes, Susan, 'Democratic accountability and policy change: economic policy in Fujimori's Peru', *Comparative Politics* 29:2 (1997), pp.209-226
- Tanaka, Martín, *Los espejismos de la democracia. El colapso del sistema de partidos en el Peru*, IEP, Lima, 1998
- Tanaka, Martín, 'Los partidos políticos en el Peru, 1992-1999. Estabilidad, sobrevivencia y política mediática', *JCAS-IEP Documento de Trabajo* 108 (1999)
- Tanaka, Martín, 'Los partidos políticos en el fujimorismo y los retos de su construcción', in Marcelo Cavarozzi and Juan Aval Medina (eds), *El asedio a la política. Los partidos latinoamericanos en la era neoliberal*, Rosario, Argentina: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Homo Sapiens Editores, 2002, pp.317-348
- Tanaka, Martín, 'Los partidos políticos en el Perú y la reforma política', mimeo, 2004
- Tuesta Soldevilla, Fernando, *Los enigmas del poder: Fujimori 1990-1996*, Fundación Fiedrich Ebert, Lima, Peru, 1997
- Tuesta Soldevilla, Fernando, *Peru político en cifras 1821-2001*, Lima: Fiedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2001
- Vargas León, Carlos, 'El nuevo mapa político peruano: Partidos políticos, movimientos nacionales, e independientes', *Documento de Trabajo* 103, Lima: IEP, 1999

Weyland, Kurt, 'La paradoja del éxito? Los determinantes del apoyo político al presidente Fujimori', *Sociología* 25 (2000), pp.213-244

## Other Working Papers in Series

- WP1 Crisis States Programme, 'Concept and Research Agenda' (April 2001) – *Also available in Spanish*
- WP2 Crisis States Programme, 'Research Activities' (April 2001)
- WP4 Crisis States Programme, 'Research in Latin America' (April 2001) – *Also available in Spanish*
- WP6 Dennis Rodgers, 'Making Danger a Calling: Anthropology, violence, and the dilemmas of participant observation' (September 2001) – *Also available in Spanish*
- WP7 Hugh Roberts, 'Co-opting Identity: The manipulation of Berberism, the frustration of democratisation and the generation of violence in Algeria' (December 2001) – *Also available in Spanish*
- WP9 Benedict Latto, 'Governance and Conflict Management: Implications for donor intervention' (February 2002) – *Also available in Spanish*
- WP10 Jo Beall, 'The People Behind the Walls: Insecurity, identity and gated communities in Johannesburg' (February 2002) – *Also available in Spanish*
- WP11 Jo Beall, Owen Crankshaw & Susan Parnell, 'Social Differentiation and Urban Governance in Greater Soweto: A case study of post-Apartheid reconstruction' (February 2002) – *Also available in Spanish*
- WP24 Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín, 'Hyper-fragmentation and Traditional Politics in Colombia: Discussing Alternative Explanations' (March 2003, revised September 2004) – *Also available in Spanish*
- WP25 Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín, 'The Times of Democratic Involutions' (March 2003, revised January 2005) – *Also available in Spanish*
- WP27 Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín, 'Criminal Rebels? A discussion of war and criminality from the Colombian experience' (April 2003)
- WP28 Luis Eduardo Fajardo, 'From the Alliance for Progress to the Plan Colombia: A retrospective look at US aid to Colombia' (April 2003)
- WP29 Jean-Paul Faguet, 'Decentralisation and local government in Bolivia' (May 2003) – *Also available in Spanish*
- WP30 Maria Emma Wills & Maria Teresa Pinto, 'Peru's failed search for political stability (June 2003)
- WP32 Carlos Medina & Hermes Martínez, 'Violence and drug prohibition in Colombia' (August 2003)
- WP35 Dennis Rodgers, 'Dying For It: Gangs, Violence and Social Change in Urban Nicaragua' (October 2003)
- WP37 David Keen, 'Demobilising Guatemala' (November 2003)
- WP38 Miguel García & Gary Hoskin, 'Political Participation and War in Colombia: An Analysis of the 2002 Elections' (November 2003)
- WP40 Ann C. Mason, 'Constructing Authority Alternatives in Colombia: Globalisation and the Transformation of Governance' (February 2004)
- WP45 Kenneth C. Shadlen, 'Representation, Participation and Development: Lessons from Small Industry in Latin America' (June 2004)
- WP46 Jonathan DiJohn, 'The Political Economy of Economic Liberalisation in Venezuela' (June 2004)
- WP47 Ana María Díaz & Fabio Sánchez, 'A Geography of Illicit Crops (Coca Leaf) and Armed Conflict in Colombia' (July 2004) – *Also available in Spanish*
- WP51 Antonio Giustozzi, '"Good" States vs. "Bad" Warlords? A Critique of State-Building Strategies in Afghanistan' (October 2004)
- WP52 Manorama Sharma, 'Critically Assessing Traditions: The Case of Meghalaya' (November 2004)
- WP53 Andries Bezuidenhout, 'Postcolonial Workplace Regimes in the Engineering Industry in South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe' (November 2004)
- WP54 Jo Beall, 'Decentralisation and Engendering Democracy: Lessons from Local Government Reform in South Africa' (November 2004)
- WP55 Laurie Nathan, 'Security Communities and the Problem of Domestic Instability' (November 2004)
- WP56 Angelika Rettberg, 'Business-led Peacebuilding in Colombia: Fad or Future of a Country in Crisis?' (December 2004)
- WP57 Diana Hoyos & Marcela Ceballos, 'Electoral Behaviour Trends and Decentralisation in Colombia's Municipalities, 1988-2000' (December 2004) – *Also available in Spanish*
- WP58 E. A. Brett, 'From Corporatism to Liberalisation in Zimbabwe: Economic Policy Regimes and Political Crisis (1980-1997)' (January 2005)
- WP59 Jo Beall, 'Exit, Voice and Tradition: Loyalty to Chieftainship and Democracy in Metropolitan Durban, South Africa' (January 2005)
- WP60 Manoj Srivastava, 'Crafting Democracy and Good Governance in Local Arenas: Theory, Dilemmas and their Resolution through the Experiments in Madhya Pradesh, India?' (April 2005)
- WP61 Dennis Rodgers, 'Unintentional Democratisation? The *Argentinzo* and the Politics of Participatory Budgeting in Buenos Aires, 2001-2004' (April 2005)
- WP62 Jean-Paul Faguet, 'The Effects of Decentralisation on Public Investment: Evidence and Four Lessons from Bolivia and Colombia' (June 2005)

It is our intention for all Crisis States Working Papers eventually to be available in English, Spanish and French. Some in the series have already been translated. For further details, and an up to date list of Working Papers, and other Crisis States publications, please consult our website ([www.crisisstates.com](http://www.crisisstates.com)).

The aim of the Crisis States Programme (CSP) at DESTIN's Development Research Centre is to provide new understanding of the causes of crisis and breakdown in the developing world and the processes of avoiding or overcoming them. We want to know why some political systems and communities, in what can be called the "fragile states" found in many of the poor and middle income countries, have broken down even to the point of violent conflict while others have not. Our work asks whether processes of globalisation have precipitated or helped to avoid crisis and social breakdown.

### Crisis States Programme collaborators

*In India:*

Asia Development Research Institute (Patna, Bihar)  
North Eastern Institute for Development Studies (Shillong)  
Developing Countries Research Centre (University of Delhi)

*In South Africa:*

Wits Institute of Social & Economic Research (WISER)  
Sociology of Work Workshop (SWOP)  
Department of Sociology  
(University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg)

*In Colombia:*

IEPRI, Universidad Nacional de Colombia  
Universidad de los Andes  
Universidad del Rosario

### Research Objectives

- We will assess how constellations of power at local, national and global levels drive processes of institutional change, collapse and reconstruction and in doing so will challenge simplistic paradigms about the beneficial effects of economic and political liberalisation.
- We will examine the effects of international interventions promoting democratic reform, human rights and market competition on the 'conflict management capacity' and production and distributional systems of existing polities.
- We will analyse how communities have responded to crisis, and the incentives and moral frameworks that have led either toward violent or non-violent outcomes.
- We will examine what kinds of formal and informal institutional arrangements poor communities have constructed to deal with economic survival and local order.



## crisis states programme

Development Research Centre,  
Development Studies Institute (DESTIN),  
LSE, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7849 4631 Fax: +44 (0)20 7955 6844  
e-mail: [csp@lse.ac.uk](mailto:csp@lse.ac.uk)

