

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN
PERU'S POLITICAL PARTIES, 1985-2000

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Paper prepared for the March 2000 Congress of the
Latin American Studies Association (LASA), Miami, Florida.

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Introduction

Political scientists have ample grounds for questioning the future of the political party. Around the globe, we are witnessing, to varying extents, the transformation of parties and party systems, the birth of new organizational forms -- and the resurrection of old organizational forms -- for contesting elections. In an era of mass media and sophisticated polling technologies, we may legitimately reconsider the functional role of parties as entities that communicate information about representatives to the represented, and about electors to the elected. Moreover, in the cases of new democracies or failed party systems, we must also ask from whence political parties or an analogous organizational form might emerge.

In this paper, I examine the case of Peru, a failed party system in a new democracy. I argue that, in an extremely presidentialist system without an effective and autonomous legislature, in an era of sophisticated media and polling technologies, **the incentives for forming political parties become minimal**. As my research on Peru will demonstrate, in such a context few politicians, least of all the aspiring presidential candidates, have an interest in forming stable and coherent political parties.

Even though opinion polls show that parties are viewed with disdain by a majority of Peruvians, the current political disarray has incited some feelings of nostalgia, particularly among certain political elites, for the political parties of 1980s. Common wisdom in Peru holds that political parties in the 80s, although weak in comparison to other democracies, were far more institutionalized than the current parties and movements that contest elections. The prospects for party system consolidation looked promising. Thus, the early 1990s are cast as a time of severe disjuncture and drastic change among political parties. **What I have uncovered, however, is far more continuity and far less change than this 'common wisdom' would suggest.**

This paper will not attempt to explain the breakdown of Peru's parties, and with them, the party system, since many scholars have already tackled this question (e.g. Cameron 1994; Tanaka 1998; Lynch 1999). Taken as a whole, this literature suggests that the collapse of the party system was overdetermined by such factors as poor performance in government, internal partisan divisions, extreme political violence, severe economic crisis and a marked increase in the informalization of economic activity.

While the above explanations are not inaccurate, this paper makes a case for the importance of a common thread that runs through both the 1980s and the 1990s: presidentialism, and the weakness of the legislative and other branches of government. First, I will present a brief historical overview of political parties in Peru, which highlights the role of presidential politics. Second, I present two sets of explanations for the origins of political parties, and suggest that studying party politicians is essential for understanding the birth (and death) of parties themselves. Third, I summarize my empirical findings for the 1985-1995 period and examine four key areas that demonstrate the impact of presidentialism on political parties: recruitment and candidate selection, election campaigns, post-election relations between leaders and parties, and the issue of regional representation. I then conclude that, in the current institutional setting, the emergence of stable, coherent parties in Peru seems unlikely.

A History of Peruvian Party Politics

Oligarchs and Modernizers: 1895-1968

At the turn of the last century, Peruvian politics was dominated by a heterogeneous array of regionally-based groups of oligarchs and the proto-parties, more accurately described as elite caucuses, that represented them. In 1919, a series of strikes and popular protests provoked a military intervention that initiated an eleven year period of rule by Augusto Leguía, who was viewed by many moderates and radicals as a much-needed political and economic ‘modernizer.’ He was also supported by the nascent groups led by Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre and José Carlos Mariátegui that would, in the 1920's, coalesce into the populist Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA) and the Socialist (later Communist) Party of Peru, respectively (Collier and Collier 1991).

In 1930, Leguía was overthrown and, one month later, APRA was organized as an official political party. Throughout the 1930s, APRA grew in strength and was severely repressed by the oligarchic regime led by General Oscar Benavides. The experience of repression became central to the identity of *apristas* and created a cleavage that would divide Peruvian politics for much of this century. The 1940s was a period of increased political clout for the APRA; between 1939 and 1945, it was incorporated into the political system by President Manuel Prado y Ugarteche, and from 1945 to 1948 the APRA actually ruled in a coalition government with a regionally-based party and the Communists.

However, a 1948 conservative coup by General Manuel Odría ended this period of elite toleration of APRA, and for the next eight years the governing regime repressed *apristas* and, at the same time, implemented a wide range of populist policies. Semi-competitive electoralism returned to Peru in 1956 with the Pact of Monterrico, which implemented a political compromise among oligarchs, modernizing elites, and APRA -- which was again allowed to participate, in exchange for limiting its popular mobilization. The period between 1956 and 1962 also saw the introduction of new political parties such as the center-right Acción Popular (AP) and the Partido Demócrata Cristiano (PDC), which competed for the political support of newly mobilized forces that APRA largely neglected (Collier and Collier 1991)

Social conflict and anti-oligarchic mobilization nonetheless accelerated in both urban and rural areas, and in 1962 a military coup attempted to mitigate demands from below with reforms from above; a military regime ruled for one year, then supported the candidacy of moderate reformist Fernando Belaúnde Terry, the personalistic leader of the AP. This compromise did not stave off further conflict and elite fears of popular mobilization; ironically, however, it was the absence of an effective reformist block, rather than the threat of radical change from a then-conservative APRA, that was the major cause of the 1968 ‘modernizing’ military coup that brought General Juan Velasco Alvarado to power.

Summarizing the pre-1968 period, several salient points emerge. First, most of the political parties in this period were elite rather than mass-based, and most were highly personalistic in nature. Second, the party system was highly volatile, with numerous splits occurring among the parties, particularly in the 1960s. Third, the severe repression of the APRA

created a fundamental divide in Peruvian politics and stifled the emergence of other competitive reformist parties, with the AP as a partial exception (Hilliker 1971). Moreover, the fact that APRA's inclusion in governing coalitions was made possible by abandoning its program and moving towards conservatism explains the ideologically inchoate nature of Peru's most institutionalized party, as well as the absence of representation for popular sectors (Collier and Collier 1991; Graham 1992). Fourth, throughout the period 1919 to 1962, whenever popular sectors threatened to gain too much power both within and outside of formal party politics, the military would 'veto.' The repeated pattern of military involvement in the political arena contributed to the weakness of the party system. Finally, it is apparent that political power in Peru traditionally has been highly centralized under both democratic and authoritarian regimes.

Elections and Post Authoritarian Politics: 1978-1990

The effects of military rule (1968-1980) on society substantially altered the political arena of the electoral regime that followed it. General Velasco's attempt at reform from above created a populace that was politically mobilized (albeit in a top-down fashion) and carved out a greatly increased economic role for the state (Stokes 1995; Cotler 1986). By the late 1970s, after a conservative counter-coup had ousted Velasco, the military began extricating itself from politics. In 1978 a Constituent Assembly was elected, with the APRA and the right-wing Partido Popular Cristiano (PPC) combining to win a majority, and a variety of small leftist parties combining for a one-third share of seats. This Assembly drafted the 1979 Constitution, which included a drastic expansion of suffrage due to the inclusion of non-literate Peruvians. In a symbolic return to power, Belaúnde of the AP won the presidency again in 1980. The AP and PPC combining to form a right-leaning majority coalition in the legislature. However, most major policy decisions -- and more than half of all laws passed -- originated from the executive.

In the 1983 municipal elections, AP lost many positions to the leftist coalition, the Izquierda Unida (IU), including the mayoralty of Lima. In 1985, Alan García Pérez of APRA was elected president, backed by a populist, multi-class coalition. García attempted a heterodox economic program that isolated Peru from the international financial community and led to the near-collapse of the state. While the economy grew marginally from 1985 to 1987, it contracted by 8.4% in 1988, and by 11.4% in 1989 (Conaghan and Malloy 1994). This economic crisis was accompanied by sociopolitical unrest. The expansion of guerilla campaigns on the part of the Sendero Luminoso and the Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru shook the very foundations of Peru's nationhood.¹

Neoliberal Reform and the Rise of 'Outsider' Candidates: the 1990's

In the 1990 elections, an internally divided left performed poorly, as did the APRA. A runoff for the presidency pitted the novelist Mario Vargas Llosa, representing a new right-wing coalition of the PPC, AP, and Libertad (Frente Democrático, or FREDEMO) supported by the urban elite, against Alberto Fujimori, a politically-unknown former university rector who, in the

¹Many rural regions, especially in the highlands, were no longer under the effective control of the state. In the late-1980s, the Sendero Luminoso also began expanding successfully into the urban slums of (or *pueblos jóvenes*) of Lima.

months preceding the election, created a makeshift organization called Cambio-90 (C-90). Vargas Llosa was a staunch and vocal advocate of neoliberal ‘shock therapy’ for Peru; Fujimori, on the other hand, campaigned on a promise of ‘no shock,’ without any clear ideological program or package of economic reforms. Fujimori won the election in the second round of balloting, and the institutional coalition that served as his party was soon severed from an effective role in governing. Any illusion of party-style politics which might have surrounded C-90 was stripped away when Fujimori included neither his running mates nor the C-90 legislators in Congress in the ensuing policy-making process. Despite the marginalization of legislators and C-90’s minority status, Fujimori was able to temporarily secure the quiescence of the Congress and attain discretionary executive powers, in part by entering into a coalition with right-wing groups in Congress (Roberts 1995; Palmer 1996).

With these presidential powers Fujimori was able to implement economic austerity policies that were even more severe than those proposed by his chief rival for the presidency. He also accelerated his discourse of the ‘politics of antipolitics,’ demonizing political parties, state institutions, career politicians, interest groups and trade unions, and holding them responsible for the country’s problems. The organized coalition of support for Fujimori included neoliberal civilian technocrats, some business elites and informal sector groups, the military and, indirectly, international lenders.² The C-90 label increasingly irrelevant to Fujimori’s power.

In late 1991, having already implemented major economic stabilization measures and having successfully curbed hyperinflation, Fujimori attempted to enact by decree a package of 120 new laws pertaining to a deepening of structural economic reform and an expansion of power for the military. By February 1992, many of these decrees had been reversed by congressional legislation. Publicly blaming the ‘corrupt political class’ for blocking his reforms on April 5, 1992, Fujimori dissolved the legislature, dismissed much of the judiciary (including the Supreme Court), and suspended the 1979 Constitution. Although some protests were held against this presidential power-grab, data from polls taken soon after the coup demonstrated broad support for Fujimori, particularly among the urban poor.³

Elections for a new Democratic Constituent Congress were held in late 1992, but were boycotted by several major parties. This boycott strategy proved to be disastrous, and demonstrates that the public did not perceive these parties to be as essential to the process as the party leaders believed. A majority of seats was won by Fujimori’s loosely-knit electoral movement, now reborn as Cambio 90 - Nueva Mayoría. In 1993, along with municipal elections, Peruvians voted in a national plebiscite on a new constitution drafted by the Democratic Constituent Congress. The new constitution narrowly passed, and among other changes, it allowed presidents to seek immediate reelection to a second term of office (Cameron

²Ironically, the president’s technocratic practices subsequently held business groups at arms’ length, and the military was partially purged and restaffed with supporters of the president.

³This support increased greatly in September 1992, when a police intelligence unit captured the leader of the Sendero Luminoso and seized the organization’s computer files, thus ‘legitimizing’ the coup and the conditions of restricted liberty under which Peruvians were living (see Palmer 1996).

1994). In April 1995, Fujimori was reelected by a wide margin.⁴ Not one of the already weakened traditional political parties attained the 5% of the vote required to maintain official party status (Kay 1995).

From 1995 to the present, Fujimori has taken a series of deliberate measures to guarantee his ability to stand for re-election in the year 2000, even though the 1993 Constitutional stipulates a maximum of two consecutive terms. The *fujimorista*-dominated Congress' 1996 "Law of Authentic Interpretation" made the questionable legal argument the President's first term did not count against this limit. In 1997, Peru's Constitutional Tribunal decided against this interpretation, which prompted the removal of its three members who signed the opinion. When, in 1998, civil society organizations collected the requisite signatures to put the issue of President Fujimori's candidacy to a referendum, Congress passed another law requiring that it first determine whether referendum issues may go before the voters. Not surprisingly, Congress subsequently voted to prevent this referendum.⁵ The present Congress has consistently acted to bolster presidentialism as the defining characteristic of Peruvian politics.

In addition to the questionable nature of the 'rule of law' in Peru, the growing volatility and absence of ideological cohesion within the electorate further supports the assertion that whatever nascent stability was exhibited by party politics in the 1980's has disintegrated. Moreover, when asked about their level of trust in parties and in the institution of Congress in particular, Peruvians across class and regional boundaries are more disdainful of party politics than the citizens of virtually any other Latin American country (Lagos 1996). Party identification in Peru, which never approached the levels of European democracies or the more entrenched Latin American party systems in countries such as Chile, experienced an accelerated decline in the 1990s (see Franco 1991). Thus, the emergence and success of 'electoral movements' as non-institutionalized, non-ideological vehicles for contesting elections, might also be seen as the end result of a longer-term rejection of programmatic political parties across the political spectrum.

The rush of 'outsider' politicians into the political arena provides a pointed example. The first noteworthy post-transition 'outsider' politician to achieve electoral success in Peru was Ricardo Belmont, the telecommunications entrepreneur and television talk-show host who was elected mayor of Lima in 1989. His electoral movement, Obras (Works), attracted centrist voters from a range of social classes by campaigning on a non-ideological platform. Fujimori's C90-NM movement later employed a similar strategy, as did former UN Secretary General Pérez de Cuellar's Unión por el Perú (UPP) in 1995.

Another successful so-called 'independent' is Alberto Andrade, the former mayor of the affluent Lima suburb of Miraflores and the current mayor of metropolitan Lima. Andrade won

⁴Furthermore, the military, which had been relatively apolitical during the 1980s, openly supported the president in his bid for reelection. This may be viewed as a *quid pro quo* for Fujimori's increased use of, and support for, military and intelligence services, as well as the expansion of the counterinsurgency campaign and the organization of armed civilian defense groups in both urban and rural areas.

⁵ I am grateful to the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and the Carter Center for their analysis of the re-election question, although the normative conclusions drawn herein are solely the author's.

the mayoralty of Lima by successfully using this same formula, managing to overcome what has become a drawback in Peruvian politics: the taint of being a seasoned party politician. Despite having extensive networks and resources, the mayor has not organized his movement into an institutionalized political party, despite his presidential candidacy in the April 2000 elections. Other leading candidates in the 2000 elections, such as Luis Castañeda Lossio and Alejandro Toledo, are also utilizing the electoral movement format, offering no reliable promise that Peruvian politics will depart from its presidentialist path during the next five years.

As for Fujimori, he ‘reinvents’ his movement during each electoral period, creating the Vamos Vecino group to contest the 1998 municipal elections, and then adding a new group called Peru 2000 to his ‘alliance’ of the same name. However, these names are mere labels and do not represent actual base-level organizations, although they may be indicative of hidden divisions among those close to the President. In sum, traditional parties in the contemporary Peruvian political system are -- and have been -- organizationally weak, distrusted by the public, and increasingly shunned by voters. The ruling ‘party’ serves little purpose other than mobilizing at election time and supporting the President in Congress.

The Genesis of Political Parties

In the political science literature, we see two distinct types sets of explanations for the organizational development of political parties: one that could be described as bottom-up; the other as top-down. The bottom-up approach, exemplified by Lipset and Rokkan (1967), explains the emergence of Western party systems as the product of historical cleavages such as class, religion, and region, which became institutionalized as parties. Such an interpretation assumes that parties are the product of social structures that are logically (and in many cases, historically) prior to the existence of representative institutions in which these cleavages could be expressed. However, these types of parties were the exception rather than the rule in the development of Latin American party systems. In Peru, as throughout much of Latin America, the middle and popular classes were incorporated into national politics by ‘catch-all’ parties: pragmatic, multi-class, often populist, appealing to nationhood and vague notions of progress and development (Dix 1989).

In the 1980s, analysts believed that they were witnessing the emergence of a class-based party system, with right, center and left parties. However, in the late 80s and early 90s, party identification within society plummeted, party militancy declined as well, and new actors espoused their role as ‘independents’ who were not fettered by a clientelistic network of supporters or plagued by political infighting. The image of the politician as manager rather than as representative gained credence in the public opinion.

I believe it is unlikely that these new electoral movements will develop the kinds of sectarian representative functions that the ideal-typical parties of Lipset and Rokkan did. Moreover, politicians and partisan elites in general tend to face a set of incentives distinct from -- and potentially in conflict with -- that of their party rank-and-file. If this is not an “iron law” as Robert Michels (1911) argued, it is at least a phenomenon that has been observed repeatedly in a wide variety of cases.

This brings us to the second body of literature on political party formation, one that focuses on the behavior of politicians themselves within the opportunity structures presented by the institutional settings in which they act. This approach is supported by rational-choice explanations for the emergence of parties. John Aldrich's 1995 book, *Why Parties?* stands out as an important example of this approach. For Aldrich, political parties in the US context emerged as a solution to problems of candidate selection, vote cycling and collective action among politicians. Although it would be a mistake to make too much of the parallels in historical context, the current and medium-term situation in Peru bears a much stronger resemblance to nineteenth century America, the setting from which Aldrich derives part of his theory, than the organic social origins of European parties that Lipset and Rokkan depict. In Peru, elections are held, representative institutions exist (although in the case of Peru they are weak), but groups with organic social bases in the politics of class or other social divisions are not prominent. Moreover, like the nineteenth-century United States, there exists a prominent discourse in which parties, particularly the traditional parties of the 1980s, are now considered to be factions that fought for private gain rather than the public good.

According to Aldrich's theory, there were certain historical junctures at which congressmen began to perceive the benefits of stronger party organization, despite the loss of independence for legislators that this would entail. These benefits include regulating competition among these ambitious politicians, coordinating benefits for themselves and their constituents, mounting effective election campaigns, and, most of all, advancing their own careers.

The difficulty in applying this sort of theory in the Peruvian context stems from the manner in which Aldrich conceived of the functions of the congress. Specifically, Aldrich assumes not only that congress exists but also that it has the capacity to make effective decisions, independent from the president or other powers. In other words, he assumes that congress as an institution is a somewhat autonomous sphere of political action. In the case of Peru, such an assumption would be erroneous, not only in currently deinstitutionalized context but, as I will argue below, in the 1980s as well.

Peru in the 1980s could already be described as strongly presidentialist, in part due to the electoral system itself. The simultaneous vote for president and for the entire congress creates a strong 'coattails effect,' in which voters are thinking primarily about the presidential election and relatively little ticket splitting occurs. As such, the focus of any national election campaign is disproportionately fixated upon the presidential race.⁶ Peru's presidentialism is also explained in part by the manner in which presidents have governed while in office and the imbalance of power between the legislative and executive branches that was already present in the 1980s. If it seems to observers of the current context that it is 'unhealthy' for Peruvian democracy that over 60% of all legislation to be passed by executive decree, we should be reminded that in the 1980s that percentage was approximately 40%. Moreover, as I will argue below, even in the 1980 the legislature was not perceived by the legislators themselves to be the most effective arena for promoting their political projects.

⁶ Such focus on the presidential campaign is obvious in journalistic accounts of election campaigns. In my review of the 1985 and 1990 elections I found that relatively little attention was paid to the congressional races.

In the 1990s, of course, the situation has become even more extreme. With the exception of the period from 1990 to 1992, which ended with an *autogolpe* (self-coup) and the closure of Congress, the president has enjoyed not only solid majorities in Congress, but also the acquiescence of his own congresspeople to pass legislation with few questions asked. Moreover, the shift from a two-chamber system with one chamber having multiple electoral districts, to a one-chamber system with a single national electoral district, further weakened the power of congress vis-a-vis the president. In addition, the short-lived attempt at creating a new regional level of government was also eliminated by the *autogolpe*, thus removing another potential balance on the president's power.

However, as I shall explain below, the shift from personalism and presidentialism to what we might call hyperpresidentialism, and the impact that it had on political parties, was not a drastic disjuncture, but rather an extension of the institutional rules and organizational practices of the post-transition decade of the 1980s. I make a case for this interpretation by looking at four key aspects of party organization at the elite level: candidate recruitment and selection; the organization of election campaigns; the relationship between sitting presidents and their parties; and the representative functions of legislators. These preliminary findings are based upon research conducted during a twelve-month period, consisting of the following:

- 1) Review of existing literature on Peruvian parties;
- 2) Systematic content review of a weekly news magazine and a monthly political journal;⁷
- 3) Interviews with the top-listed congressional candidates from 1985, 1990 and 1995;⁸
- 4) Collection of intra-party documents and party propaganda;
- 5) Analysis of a random sample of lower-house legislative proposals, from the 1985-1990 period and the 1990-1992 period.

Recruitment and Candidate Selection

In AP, PPC, and to a lesser extent in APRA and the various leftist parties, my research uncovered very personalistic patterns of political recruitment. When asked how they became involved in formal politics, most respondents from AP and APRA recounted a story of a personal encounter with the founding leader of the party, Fernando Belaúnde Terry in the case of AP, and Haya de la Torre in the case of APRA. In many cases, these testimonials mentioned the personal qualities of these leaders as the key factor; the *jefes fundadores* (founding leaders) were so wise, so charismatic, even so handsome, that these future candidates were convinced. In the case of

⁷ The publications reviewed are *Caretas* and *Quehacer*.

⁸ For the 1985 and 1990 elections for what was then a bicameral congress, I interviewed the first two candidates on each party or slate's Senate list (a single national district), and the top candidate on each party or slate's Chamber of Deputies list (regional, multiple member districts) for metropolitan Lima and two other populous departments: Arequipa and La Libertad, Puno, and Junin. For the 1995 elections, I interviewed the first three candidates on each party's congressional list (for a unicameral congress). In addition, I interviewed party functionaries and leaders of affiliated organizations for each party during the period under study.

APRA, many respondents also cited family connections as a determining factor in their political participation. It is noteworthy that many AP and leftist candidates also came from *aprista* families, that is to say, families that were politicized a generation or two earlier by what was then the only truly mass party in Peru.

Of course, personalism and the identification of an organization with its founding leader was also extreme in later movements, most notably Fujimori's C90-NM, the Unión por El Perú (UPP) of Javier Pérez de Cuellar, and to a certain extent the Izquierda Socialista led by Alfonso Barrantes. As well, the conjunctural nature of these electoral movements -- formed on short notice, to compete in a given election -- makes it almost impossible to distinguish between political recruitment and electoral mobilization, since these groups are not active outside of the election campaign cycle, and some only last for one such cycle. However, it is also true that the party organizations of the 1980s displayed a high degree of personalism and a lack of institutionalization beyond the party leaders themselves. The APRA as an organization never recovered from Haya's death, despite agreeing in 1984 on Alan García as a promising leader and a compromise among the different internal factions. What is left of AP continues to look to the aging Belaúnde as its de facto leader.

Methods of candidate selection utilized by the party leaders in the 1980s also demonstrate a great deal of personalism. Within APRA during several periods, and within AP in 1985, internal elections were in fact held, but party leaders liberally used their prerogative to reorder the candidate lists, eliminate names they felt were inappropriate and add new names. This was true not only on national level lists for the Senate, but also on departmental lists for the Chamber of Deputies. In several electoral periods, the leaders of AP and PPC literally hand-picked the candidates.

Within the IU in 1985, there were varying levels of internal democracy within the parties that made up the alliance, but these internal decisions were filtered by the system of quotas used to designate positions on the list, in which each party had an equal number of spots on the list for its candidates. When the alliance disintegrated several years later, it was in part due to conflicts over the method of candidate selection and the implementation of a 'one militant, one vote' policy that would have robbed the smaller parties of their fixed quota of candidates. After this split, the Izquierda Unida kept the system of quotas for the 1990 elections, while the Izquierda Socialista had to fill its lists at the last minute with dozens of outsiders invited to run as their candidates. In this same election the FREDEMO coalition let the leaders of each of its three groups (Belaúnde, Bedoya and Vargas Llosa) suggest candidates, which were to be reviewed by Vargas Llosa himself and then placed on the candidate lists such that each group had a candidate in every third spot.

Cambio 90, in its original form, used a completely ad-hoc method of candidate selection. In addition, unlike the other parties I have thus far depicted, many of these candidates had no real desire to actually serve as politicians. In Lima, the groups that supported the Fujimori candidacy -- evangelical Christians, university professors, small business organizations and the Japanese-Peruvian community -- provided the base from which candidates were picked by the presidential candidate. Outside of Lima, the search for candidates was much more difficult, and standards for

selection were significantly relaxed.⁹ This lack of vocation for politics among the original Fujimoristas also explains the surprising lack of resentment that they held against Fujimori after he permanently dismissed them from Congress in 1992, in many cases never to return.

In the 1990s, these personalistic and ad-hoc methods of candidate selection are far more common among parties and electoral movements. In 1995, Fujimori decided to dismiss 20 of his sitting constituent assembly representatives and exclude them from the congressional candidate list. In the UPP, Pérez de Cuellar reserved the right to place his own preferred candidates in the top ten spots. Only the PPC in its weakened state attempted to hold primaries in 1994.

In sum, we can safely conclude that the uninstitutionalized *caudillista* nature of parties and movements in the 1990s has deep roots in the parties of the 1980s. Even then, the actors' behavior demonstrated that organizational power was concentrated in the founding leaders and presidential candidates of these groups, and that the congressional candidates' collective action problems were solved not by adherence to a party as much as by allegiance to a leader. Moreover, for truly ambitious politicians, the temptation to split from an existing party and try one's luck as a presidential candidate could be observed in splinter movements from APRA, PPC, and IU.¹⁰

If it is indeed the case that centralized candidate selection makes for more disciplined and coherent party as long as the party label matters (Poire 2000), then in the case of extreme presidentialism it appears that label matters only for the winning party, and, in the case of Peru, even then it is secondary to personalistic relations with the executive.

Election Campaigns

As I mentioned earlier, in reviewing the manner in which parties organized for election campaigns in 1985, 1990 and 1995, my research found a disproportionate focus on the presidential race and minimal attention to the congressional race. Both in Lima and outside of the capital city, journalistic coverage of the elections was almost entirely fixated on the presidential hopefuls, and in the 90s, this disequilibrium was even more marked than in the 80s.

Candidates' own depictions of their campaign strategies and activities also support this evaluation. In the 1985 and 1990 elections, most candidates in my sample said that the campaign strategy that they perceived to be most effective was to travel or appear publicly with the presidential candidate and promote the idea that they were a favored candidate of the presidential hopeful. The utility of this strategy is further accentuated by the need to compete for the preferential vote within each party list. In the 1990s, the incentive to link one's fortunes to the presidential candidate still existed, but the high costs and logistical difficulties in campaigning at the national level in a single electoral district meant that many congressional candidates did not campaign extensively. In the case of the Cambio 90 - Nueva Mayoría list in 1995, for example, candidates were ordered by the President not to air any televised spots of

⁹ In Cusco, one winning candidate for the Chamber of Deputies was so inebriated when he signed on to the party list that he had to be told the following day that he was a candidate.

¹⁰ These splinter groups were led by Andrés Townshend, Miguel Angel Mufarech, and Alfonso Barrantes respectively.

their own, so as not to crowd out Fujimori's campaign propaganda. By their own account, most of the winning candidates from Fujimori's group barely campaigned at all in 1995.

Available data on the topic of campaign financing is highly unreliable, since parties' declarations of their expenses are provided voluntarily and are never verified or subjected to any sort of audit. However, from my interview sample I learned some important details regarding campaign finance. First, with the exception of Vargas Llosa's FREDEMO, parties and movements did not distribute funding to congressional candidates. A few parties offered printed flyers and posters free of charge, but virtually all of the parties' resources went towards the presidential race. Moreover, the parties of the 80s took a percentage of their congresspeople's salaries in order to support future presidential campaigns, and generated few sources of income outside of this scheme. The ephemeral nature of the new electoral movements made this practice irrelevant in the 1990s. Second, congressional candidates in both the 80s and the 90s had very little success in finding interested donors for their campaigns, and relied upon their own savings or the help of friends and family members. Those candidates with social contacts in the upper classes often arranged for televised spots to be given away or sold at a deeply discounted rate. As television became increasingly important as a campaign tool in the 1990s, congressional candidates found themselves less able to access this medium, not only in terms of paid advertising but also in terms of the diminished coverage that they received from news programs.

To conclude, if campaigns in the 1990s are strongly skewed in their focus on the presidency, there was a great disequilibrium in the 1980s as well, in the manner in which parties conducted their campaigns and communicated with voters.

Post-election Relations Between Leaders and their Parties

As suggested above, Peru's presidents throughout the period under study have displayed a strong tendency towards governing alone, without resorting to negotiations with their party organizations or, in some cases, with their parliamentarians. Upon election in 1985, Alan García surrounded himself with non-*aprista* advisors, who were the authors of many of the important laws and policies during his term in office, much to the chagrin of loyal party militants who had risen up the ranks of the party organization. García also made drastic decisions such as the nationalization of the banking system without consulting his congressional caucus. Of course, this is on a different scale than Fujimori placing some of his own congresspeople under house arrest after the 1992 *autogolpe*. Nonetheless, it does suggest that the incentives to "go it alone" once in office were present in the 1980s as well.

While the party congressional caucuses of the 1980s tended to bow to the will of the party leader, these relationships now fall into one of two extreme categories. On one hand, the Cambio 90 - Nueva Mayoría congressional group is characterized by its entirely subordinate relationship with the executive, beyond what political scientists are accustomed to measuring in terms of party discipline. As one *oficialista* congressperson described it, discussion does take place within the caucus and hypothetically the President's proposals can be outvoted, but it has never actually happened. Occasionally, Fujimori has allowed congresspeople to vote their conscience -- provided that a majority of votes was safely ensured. Another prominent C90 -

NM congressperson said, when asked whom he feels he represents when he serves in Congress, replied that he had no idea whom he represents, his job is to support the President.

At the other extreme are groups, such as the Frente Independiente Moralizador (FIM) and the Unión por el Perú (UPP) within which party discipline is so weak that the groups themselves do not even attempt to coordinate their voting in Congress. Immediately following the 1995 election, some 'independent' groups ceased to function as organizations, and became little more than insignificant labels. This was the case for the UPP for example, once it became clear that Pérez de Cuellar was not interested in continuing his party leadership role beyond his failed Presidential candidacy. Another indication of this organizational weakness is the number of defections that these groups have experienced, a process of decay that began as soon as the sessions of the newly elected Congress were initiated. The migration of legislators has tended to gravitate towards the Fujimori camp in order to gain benefits such as the presidencies of congressional commissions, which, since 1995, have only been assigned to members of the Congressional majority. During the 1995-2000 period, 24 out of a total of 120 legislators changed their affiliation. According to several respondents, the ruling side of the Congress has also quietly used threats of blackmail against congresspeople whose affiliation they wanted to sway. Yet another tactic is to shut a congressperson out of the decision-making process so completely that they begin to see their participation as futile and cease to present legislation or even attend legislative sessions. Finally, there are also some incentives for small congressional groups to reconstitute independently in groups with six or more members -- the minimum required to gain a seat at the Mesa Directiva (Board of Directors), the agenda-setting institution within Congress.

To sum up, if the parties-in-congress of the 1980s had dependent relations with their presidents, the parties-in-congress of the 1990s display two modal tendencies: complete subservience and progressive disintegration. Again, in the 1990s, the party label is only valuable to those on the winning side of elections.

The Politics of Regional Representation

As mentioned earlier, the 1993 Constitution altered the structure of congressional representation by eliminating the bicameral system. From 1980 to 1992, the lower house was made up of 180 deputies elected from a closed and blocked list (proportional representation) with preferential voting within each 'department' of Peru. The upper house had 60 senators elected by the same system but at a national level, that is, in a single national district. As of the 1995 elections, 120 legislators were elected to a unicameral congress with a single national district. Another change that the 1993 Constitution effected was the elimination of a short-lived (1990-1992) experiment with regional governments, entities made up of several departments each (Lima was excluded) to which many functions -- and a significant portion of the national budget -- of the central government were to be devolved. At first glance, then, it appears that this transformation resulted in a marked decrease in the quality of regional political representation. However, my research indicates that, despite the existence of these formal institutions, the ability of regional representatives to gain benefits or express preferences on behalf of their constituents was minimal.

In the Chamber of Deputies, it is indeed the case that over half of all legislative proposals had explicitly departmental or regional content. However, most of these proposals were merely symbolic gestures and were never debated, let alone passed into law. Moreover, according to former deputies, the most effective way to gain benefits for one's department was by means of a ministerial or executive request, a procedure that, in reality, was only available to those in the president's party, and more specifically to a smaller group of congresspeople favored by the President. The fact that these legislators, with the exception of 1990-1992, were also in the congressional majority appears to have been immaterial to their success in acquiring schools, bridges, and other state investments for their departments. Most importantly, regardless of these deputies efforts at pork barreling, most social and infrastructural spending was initiated in and administered by the executive branch and not the legislature.

In the current unicameral system, parties and movements do attempt to recruit congressional candidates from a variety of departments across the country, in the hope of attracting the votes of people who know or have heard of the candidate because of his or her local activities. However, there is no mechanism -- and no expectation -- for these people to act on behalf of their home departments once elected. Targeted spending decisions are the prerogative of the president and his ministers, and the current government is explicitly critical of the previous model of regional representation.

More important than this regional recruitment, a prominent new criteria for choosing candidates in the 1990s is that they already have a visible profile at the national level. Given the difficulties in mounting a nation-wide campaign for congress, the low budgets available to these candidates, and the densely populated field (each list has 120 candidates), a useful strategy for parties is to choose someone already well known for other, non-political activities. Thus, in addition to businesspeople, bureaucrats and municipal politicians, those recruited as candidates include well-known TV and radio personalities, athletes, cultural figures, strippers, and even the President's ex-wife.

As for the ill-fated experiment with regional government, it is noteworthy that one of the debates that polarized the congress just before the autogolpe of 1992 was on the financing of the regions and the political will to fiscally decentralize the nation. Moreover, their demise was hastened not only by the lack of public awareness of their functions and by their remarkably poor performance in governing, but also by the lack of support that they received from party leaders other than the President. Future presidential hopefuls saw these regional governments as a threat to their privileged status as party bosses, and feared that new regionally-based leaders would supplant their positions.

Thus, it appears that the extreme presidentialism of Peruvian politics also had a strong impact on the quality of representation, particularly regional representation, in the 1980s. Representative institutions were, as a result, so fragile that the autogolpe and the changes implemented by the 1993 Constitution were easily executed coups de grace.

Prognosis: The April 2000 Elections and Beyond

A cursory glance at the election campaigns currently underway in Peru presents us with an even more extreme case of presidentialism. The institutional context continues to favor a focus on the presidency, although the pre-election machinations of candidate-president Alberto Fujimori have reduced the exposure of other presidential candidates, transforming the electoral process into a referendum on the president himself. The leading candidates thus far have been those from loosely-organized movements not dissimilar from the organizational template used so successfully by Fujimori. Only the Mayor of Lima, Alberto Andrade, and his Somos Peru group drew upon its politicians at the municipal level in the process of constructing their parliamentary list, and even then these candidates comprised only 8 out of 120 candidates. In all of the competing parties and groups, candidate selection was conducted in a highly personalized manner, with notable figures being 'invited' onto lists whose members have little that binds them together other than their participation in this particular election.¹¹ While it remains to be seen what the relationship will be between the president and his congresspeople in the 2000-2005 period, all indications are that the 'electoral movement' has become the predominant organizational format for contesting elections in Peru.

Laying the blame for presidentialism solely upon Alberto Fujimori would seem to be misguided. His predecessors, as I have demonstrated, behaved in a manner not unlike Fujimori. More importantly, his successors will inherit many of the executive powers and prerogatives currently enjoyed by the President. Thus, the great irony of Peruvian politics is that, in the absence of public pressure (which has thus far been minimal), an improvement in the institutionalization of politics in the foreseeable future will require the voluntary devolution of power on the part of the President -- an irrational decision, an heroic gesture on the part of a winning presidential candidate, whomever that might be. Thus, we have few guarantees that the powers in Peru's political system will become more balanced in the foreseeable future.

Conclusions

In this paper I argued for a rethinking of the assumption that the early 1990s was a period of severe rupture in the organization of political parties. Although the *autogolpe* and the 1993 Constitution did change the rules of the game for parties and candidates, the parties of the 1980s were much weaker and far more personalistic than contemporary analysts believed. In fact, my examination of issues such as candidate selection, election campaigns, intra-party relations, and regional representation all suggest that the personalistic rule of Alberto Fujimori has deep roots in the political practices of his predecessors. Moreover, it is precisely this personalism, and the imbalance of power that intensely focuses politics on the presidency, that condemned parties to this debilitated state. Well-organized parties are not a necessity if politics is perceived to be almost exclusively about running for president and governing from the executive branch. In such an environment, there are few incentives for politicians in the legislature to engage in the sort of collective action that is a basis for party formation at the elite level.

¹¹ In this election, as party organizer Absalon Vasquez admitted on live television, aspirants to Fujimori's list were investigated by the National Intelligence Service (SIN), rather than being submitted to the psychiatric evaluation that was used in 1995.

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