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A Case for Disastrous Party Politics in Peru

Carlo A. Chavez Linares

Illinois Wesleyan University, cchavezl@iwu.edu

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Abstract

The commemoration of 200 years of Peruvian independence brings the question if the republic is really free and sovereign. Even though Peru is formally a democracy, it is weak and not yet consolidated. Satisfaction with democracy is low, and many analysts claim that it already died in the 1990s. In a narrow sense, Peruvian democracy is in danger because of the personalistic nature of the political parties. This study defends the argument that parties in Peru are weak. Specifically, it focuses on the shift from traditional to proto-parties. Traditional parties failed in their political role, and, therefore, new anti-elite and personalistic vehicles started to gain power in politics. The main hypothesis is that the parties are weak because they are not properly organized, and have been controlled by self-interested individuals. Specifically, there is an exploration of the role and development of diverse groups of parties in the various presidential elections from 1980 to 2021. There is also a close look at urbanization rates per party, as parties represent a wide variety of individuals, and it is crucial to understand where the parties get their votes from. By knowing the success or failure of specific parties, their presence or absence in socio-political scenarios, their demographic focus, their presidential journey through the years, and their current situation, this paper shows that Peruvian parties are weak and in need of reform. Introduction

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The commemoration of 200 years of Peruvian independence brings the question if the republic is really free and sovereign. Even though Peru is formally a democracy, it is weak and not yet consolidated. Satisfaction with democracy is low, and many analysts claim that it already died in the 1990s. In a narrow sense, Peruvian democracy is in danger because of the personalistic nature of the political parties. This study defends the argument that parties in Peru are weak. Specifically, it focuses on the shift from traditional to proto-parties. Traditional parties failed in their political role, and, therefore, new anti-elite and personalistic vehicles started to gain power in politics. The main hypothesis is that the parties are weak because they are not properly organized, and have been controlled by self-interested individuals. Specifically, there is an exploration of the role and development of diverse groups of parties in the various presidential elections from 1980 to 2021. There is also a close look at urbanization rates per party, as parties represent a wide variety of individuals, and it is crucial to understand where the parties get their votes from. By knowing the success or failure of specific parties, their presence or absence in socio-political scenarios, their demographic focus, their presidential journey through the years, and their current situation, this paper shows that Peruvian parties are weak and in need of reform.

Introduction

Peru has been living in a decent democratic experience since 2001, with five consecutive participatory, fair, and peaceful elections. However, Peruvian democracy is not yet consolidated, and hardly will be in the next few years. Peruvian citizens' average satisfaction with democracy

between 1996 and 2010 is 17%, which is way below the general Latin American average (35%) (Latinobarometro, 2010, p.47). Furthermore, Cheibub (2007) and Golder (2004) consider Peru's democracy to have ended somewhere between 1989 and 1990 (Maeda, 2010).

This brings the question: Is Peruvian democracy in danger? And this gives light to the main argument: Peruvian democracy is in danger because the political parties are “agglomerations of individual and group interests more than solid and representative parties.” (Vargas, 2020, p.1). Democracy without a solid party system is exposed to several dangers that could lead to democratic breakdown. As E.E. Schattschneider has said: “democracy is unthinkable without parties.” (Levitsky, 1999, p.6; Levitsky & Cameron, 2003, p.1). This is the case because parties provide various functions in a democracy, such as: links, representation, information on candidates, discipline, and accountability to democratic institutions.

This study defends the argument that political parties in Peru are weak, and focuses on the shift from traditional to proto-parties. Since 2000, support for traditional political parties has thoroughly collapsed in Peru, paving the way for the rise of personalist leaderships. As a result, new personalistic vehicles, proto-parties, anti-elite, and left-wing groups started to gain power.

The main hypothesis is that the parties are weak because they are not properly organized, and have been controlled by self-interest individuals. This egoism is very dangerous for democracy because, as Simón Bolívar has said: “the continuation of the authority of the same individual has often been the end of democratic governments.” (Oppenheimer, 2010, p.39). In this paper, the role of parties in Peru and Latin America is explored, therefore showing the important factors that lead either to party breakdown or success. There is also a study on the diverse groups of parties that participated in the presidential elections from 1980 to 2021.

Julio Cotler argues that “the reading of history is indispensable to an understanding of

the politics of the present.” (Crabtree, 2010, p.361). Therefore, a historical chronology is also included in this paper, which helps understand why parties have the problems they currently face. This analysis as well manifests why new anti-system options such as proto-parties came into the scene. In the last Peruvian election (2021), there were barely any traditional parties in the game, and most parties were personalistic vehicles with very few years of existence in the political field.

This paper is organized into five sections: a literature review on parties, first empirical analysis (number of votes vs. time in years), historical chronology (from 1821 to 2021), second empirical analysis (urbanization level vs. political party), and conclusions, in which the main thesis is answered, the limitations are explained, and alternative future research are introduced.

By taking a look at the success or failure of specific parties, their presence or absence in socio-political scenarios, their demographic focus, their presidential journey through the years, and their current situation, this paper shows that Peruvian parties are weak and in need of reform.

Literature Review

Theory of Parties: Role and Importance

Political parties take on a variety of roles for the achievement, preservation, and enhancement of democracy (Levitsky & Cameron, 2003, Levitsky, 1999). First, parties provide a vital link between the people and the state, fulfilling a role both in terms of representation and aggregation of interests (Crabtree, 2010, p.359). They also supply a bridge between executives and legislatures (Levitsky & Cameron, 2003), which is crucial for overcoming political clogging.

Political parties furnish critical information about what candidates stand for and how they can be expected to govern, while also providing them with training, experience, and preservation

(Levitsky, 1999; Levitsky & Cameron, 2003; Sánchez, 2009). Parties make it possible for voters to hold their representatives to long-term consequences of policies beyond the next election (Rosenbluth & Shapiro, 2018, p.230), therefore reshaping politicians' incentives in ways that induce them to act in a more collective, responsible, and accountable manner.

Similarly, parties help hold elected leaders accountable to democratic institutions. Because parties exist beyond a single election and represent a wider view of interests, they are more trustworthy than even the most appealing politician. Hence, politicians must work through parties to obtain higher office and must cooperate with them to remain there (Levitsky & Cameron, 2003; Rosenbluth & Shapiro, 2018, p.230). Having mentioned the importance of political parties, now there is awareness of what roles and values create an effective party system.

Theory of Parties: Factors for Weakness and Collapse

Preference for democracy is a crucial factor when talking about party weakness (Mainwaring & Pérez-Liñán, 2013). When a political class is absent, politics becomes a universe of uncommitted politicians (Levitsky & Cameron, 2003; Sánchez, 2009; Schedler, 1998), many of whom engage in acts such as suspending the Constitution, arresting opposing politicians, restricting media, or manipulating electoral results (Maeda, 2010; Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018).

Institutions are crucial when talking about party weakness. When a society is populated by self-interested actors, it becomes difficult for institutions to introduce order (Lebow, 2003, pp.324,328), leaving opposing politicians defenseless (Levitsky & Cameron, 2003). When institutions are weak, individuals lose the ability to feel responsible for their own lives (Savater, 2007), which also affects the honesty of vote counting (Schedler, 1998, pp.97-98).

Populism also plays a role in party weakness, as people who believe parties do not care about voters are vulnerable to populist demagoguery (Rosenbluth & Shapiro, 2018, p.229; Roberts, 1995, p.113). When running for office, populists portray their competitors as the corrupt elite (anti-elitism), speak for the people as a whole (anti-pluralism), and deny party legitimacy. When in power, populist governance exhibits three main features (Müller, 2016, Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018, p.22): attempts to colonize the state, corruption, and mass clientelism.

Another threat for party collapse is executive supremacy (Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018, p.6). Deadlock may frustrate presidents, leading them to seek unconstitutional solutions, which leaves people disillusioned and eager for a non-democratic government (Maeda, 2010). When the individual predominates excessively over the institutions, the harmony of the social whole can be broken (Savater, 2007), and nobody cares to uphold what should be common to all.

Presidential breakdown is another factor for party fragmentation. While impeachments serve to remove corrupt or hegemonic presidents, they might harm democracies and deepen polarization. Deliberately overthrowing presidents might drop citizens' level of satisfaction with democracy (Sposito, 2021), creating the conditions for the rise of hegemonic leaders.

Lastly, another factor for party collapse is corruption. Many politicians obtain money through illicit means with the purpose of personal profit and financing the smooth running of their parties, which end up becoming the ends of themselves (Savater, 2007): everything that is done in favor of the party is positive, and anything that hurts it is negative.

Up to this point, it can be noticed how specific factors such as undemocratic behavior, institutional weakness, populism, executive supremacy, presidential breakdown, and corruption come as principal enemies of party systems. Eventually, all those threats can be the cause or consequence of one another, depending on every political context. Also, all those crucial factors

help understand why the shift from traditional to proto-parties happens in democracies.

Party Politics in Latin America

Latin America has clearly undemocratic political structures that prevent control of government decisions and the functioning of civil society (Savater, 2007). The state's presence looks partial (Schedler, 1998, p.98) and creates a turbulent scenario for parties (Seawright, 2012), therefore generating high electoral volatility, legislative inefficiency, personalism, executive-legislative deadlock, policy ineffectiveness, and regime crisis (Levitsky, 1999, p.7).

Another factor is the rise of anti-system candidates, none of which are conducive to a stable democracy (Levitsky, 1999, p.7; Levitsky & Cameron, 2003; Rosenbluth & Shapiro, 2018, p.199; Barnechea, 1995, p.46; Roberts, 1995, p.112).¹ In Latin America, the advocates of populism have always stressed its inclusionary and emancipatory character (Müller, 2016, p.19), presenting an illegitimate program that further hurts the population.

Effectively, all those trends affect Latin America as a whole, and with this general background, it will now be easier to understand the Peruvian case.

Party Politics in Peru

Peru is a presidential regime with a unicameral parliament that follows the principle of proportional representation (Romero Ballivian, 2007, pp.237-238).² Presidential elections are conducted in a two-round system³ with no consecutive re-election for the President (Sulmont Haak, 2017, p.147).⁴ Curiously, gaining the presidential seat has always been the goal of Peruvian parties because of the benefits that come with it (Sulmont Haak, 2017, pp.152,155), as

¹Of all 15 presidents elected in Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela between 1990 and 2012, five were populist outsiders who ended up weakening democratic institutions (Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018, p.22).

²The President and parliamentarians are elected simultaneously for a term of five years.

³If no candidate obtains more than half of the valid votes, there is a call to a second round between the two most voted candidates.

⁴The President can only present himself again after every other presidential term.

the President is the supreme head of the Armed Forces and of the executive branch.

The Peruvian party system follows a moderate pluralistic system (Romero Ballivian, 2007, pp.237-238), in which coalitions are an opportunistic tool common at every election. Once elections come around, a party member of a coalition is likely to blame their allies for ineffective or unpopular policies (Rosenbluth & Shapiro, 2018, pp.35-36) that come from the coalition.

Peru has an almost pure form of candidate-centered politics that creates a highly unstable party system. Because the party system is created anew at each election (Levitsky, 1999, p.6; Freidenberg, 2016; Muñoz, 2021), candidates have no interest in party consolidation, therefore allowing more radical options to gain power.

The decisions that Peruvian representatives make are the result of particular interests, which creates distrust and leads citizens to party alienation. Therefore, lacking stable referends, electors must make strong bets at every election (Crabtree, 2010; Muñoz, 2021; LaNegra, 2021), which limits their capacity (Levitsky & Cameron, 2003) to evaluate candidates retrospectively.

Relevantly, Peruvian parties did not develop a strong institutional presence over long periods of time, and were often movements associated with specific political leaders (Crabtree, 2001, p.289). As a result, these parties currently have no structured existence over much of the country, and fail to act as a channel for public participation in the decision-making processes of the State (Crabtree, 2010, p.359).

Peru also has very marked social cleavages (Forsyth, 2018, p.164) and ethnic geographical divides (Crabtree, 2010). Exclusion from citizenship rights is an enduring legacy of colonialism, and many indigenous cultures coexist uneasily with notions of citizenship (Levitsky & Cameron, 2003). Furthermore, democratic institutions are limited to upper-middle-

class Lima (Levitsky, 1999; LaNegra, 2021), which affects the formation of a real democratic movement.

In summary, fragmentation, weak ties to popular sectors, lack of presence, and social and ethnic divides makes it difficult for Peruvian parties to exercise their democratic functions. This weakness of the party system, combined with the illegal and particular interests of its members, creates a big sense of disapproval, rejection, and alienation among Peruvian citizens.

Empirical Analysis (I)

In this section, there is a careful study of every party and the number of votes they gained during the first rounds of presidential elections from 1980 to 2021. This analysis deals with 18 parties over a total of 10 elections.⁵ It starts in 1980 because that is the year in which a real democracy in proper terms can be witnessed, mostly because of universal civil suffrage that was allowed by the 1979 Constitution.

The variables for this study are number of votes, which are a measure for either party success or failure, and time in years. Therefore, the number of votes (Y variable) depends on time in years (X variable). From the main hypothesis, it is shown that, through time, traditional parties receive fewer votes, and new, personalistic options gain more votes.

Carlos Meléndez (2007) classifies contemporary Peruvian political parties in two groups: traditional parties (formed before 1979) and new parties (established since the 1990s). Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA/PAP), Acción Popular (AP), Partido Popular Cristiano (PPC), and Izquierda Unida (IU) are part of the first group. In the second group, there is Fujimorismo, Perú Posible (PP), Partido Nacionalista Peruano (PNP), Solidaridad Nacional (SN), and other minor groupings (Sulmont Haak, 2017, p.164; Freidenberg, 2016, p.457).

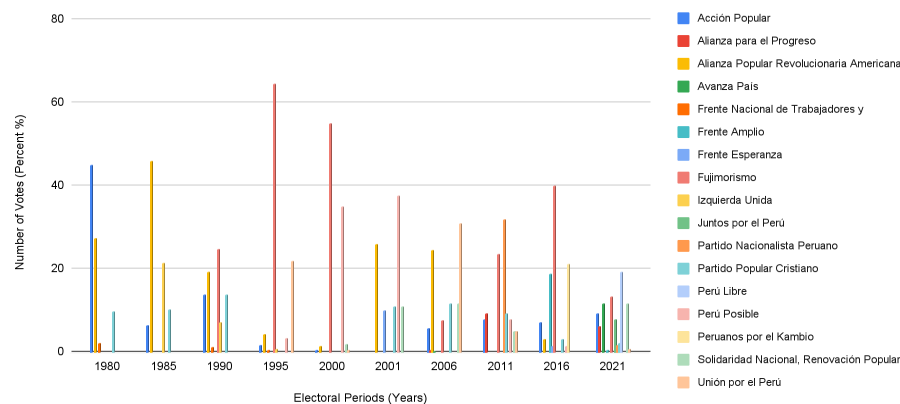
⁵There should have been nine electoral periods, but the democratic transition in 2001 added one more period.

Table 1	Number of Votes (%) During Presidential Elections 1980-2021									
Political Party	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021
Acción Popular	44.93	6.25	13.8	1.64	0.42		5.75	7.81	6.97	9.12
Alianza para el Progreso							0.4	9.25		6.02
Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana	27.24	45.74	19.2	4.11	1.38	25.82	24.5		2.91	
Avanza País							0.2			11.6
Frente Nacional de Trabajadores y Campesinos	2		1	0.34						
Frente Amplio									18.82	0.45
Frente Esperanza						9.85			1.32	
Fujimorismo			24.6	64.42	54.97		7.43	23.53	39.85	13.36
Izquierda Unida		21.26	7	0.57						
Juntos por el Perú										7.85
Partido Nacionalista Peruano								31.75		1.59
Partido Popular Cristiano	9.58	10.23	13.8			10.91	11.7	9.25	2.91	1.98
Perú Libre										19.11
Perú Posible				3.24	34.99	37.45		7.81	1.31	
Peruanos por el Kambio									21	
Solidaridad Nacional, Renovación Popular					1.8	10.91	11.7	4.91		11.67
Unión por el Perú				21.81	0.33		30.9	4.91		0.7

In Table 1,⁶ a total of 18 parties participated in various presidential elections from 1980 to 2021. It is relevant to mention that this table just includes the most suitable groupings that had been active in presidential elections since 1980. If every party and coalition from each election were included, there would be a pretty long and confusing table.

In Table 2, there are bar variations as the years move on, showing that there is no real party consistency.⁷ The number of votes and all general information were obtained from three databases: Electoral Geography 2.0: Mapped Politics (Kireev, et al., 2007-2021); Election Guide: Democracy Assistance and Election News (International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 2011-2021); and the Political Database of the Americas (PDBA) (Buffo & Langer, 1995-2006).

Table 2 - Presidential Elections 1980 - 2021



In 1980 and 1985, the only participants in presidential elections were the traditional parties and the Frente Nacional de Trabajadores y Campesinos (FRENATRACA). AP had its highest voting percentage in 1980, and IU and APRA in 1985. Later, IU and FRENATRACA

⁶Purple: traditional parties. Green: party alone. Cyan: political coalition or alliances between parties.

⁷It is interesting to notice how the voting percentage for winners in diverse elections tends to decrease as years move on. From 1980 to 2000 (with the exception of 1990), all winners gained more than 40% of the vote. From 2000 to 2016, none of the winners surpassed 40% of votes, while in 2021 none of the candidates, and not even the winner, gained more than 20% of votes.

got less than 1% of the vote in 1995, and ceased to appear for the rest of the table.

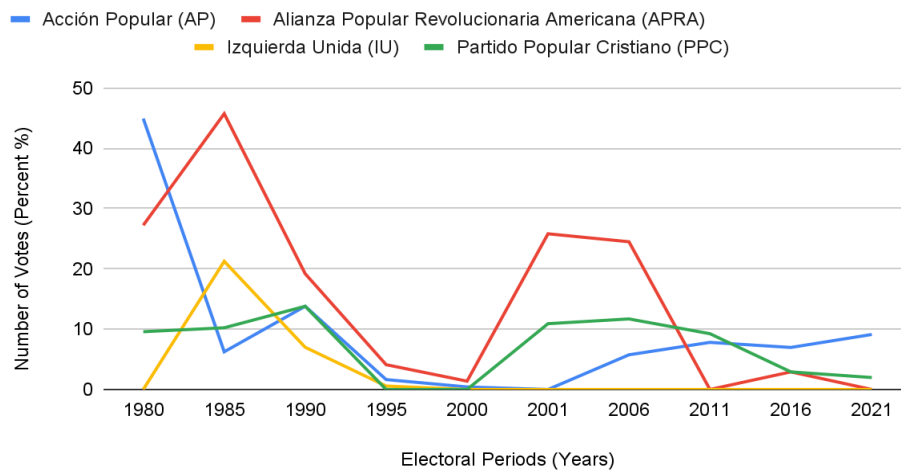
PPC mainly participates in elections by forming coalitions with other parties. An exception happened in 2021 after 36 years, in which PPC gained its lowest result in history: 1.98% of votes. PPC by itself barely reaches 10% of the votes in every election. Therefore, this is a low-profile party without any relevant year of victory or impressive results.

AP has been the most consistent party in relation to independent and constant participation, but the number of votes gained through the years is too low. From 1990 until 2021, AP averaged 5.28% of votes. At its lowest, it gained just 0.60% of votes in 2000. Therefore, in a period of seven electoral cycles, AP barely made it to more than 5% of votes. With a voting average of less than 10% in 30 years, party survival may be very difficult in the years to come.

APRA also seems to have wide participation and consistency, but its votes present weird variations. At its highest, it was at 45.74% in 1985, and then the number of votes started to decline up to its lowest in history in 2000 (1.38%). But suddenly, the party resurrects in 2001 and 2006 with 25.82% and 24.50% of votes. However, in the next three periods, APRA is virtually absent. It only participated in the 2016 election, gaining just 5.83% of the overall vote.

Before 1990, traditional parties seemed to be in different numerical positions, meaning that there was a sort of fair electoral competition between them. APRA and AP were at their highest, and IU and PPC were at least above 10% of votes. Suddenly, all of them declined in votes during the 1990s, and just gradually recovered starting in 2001, but none of them reached more than 10% of the votes from 2011 to 2021.

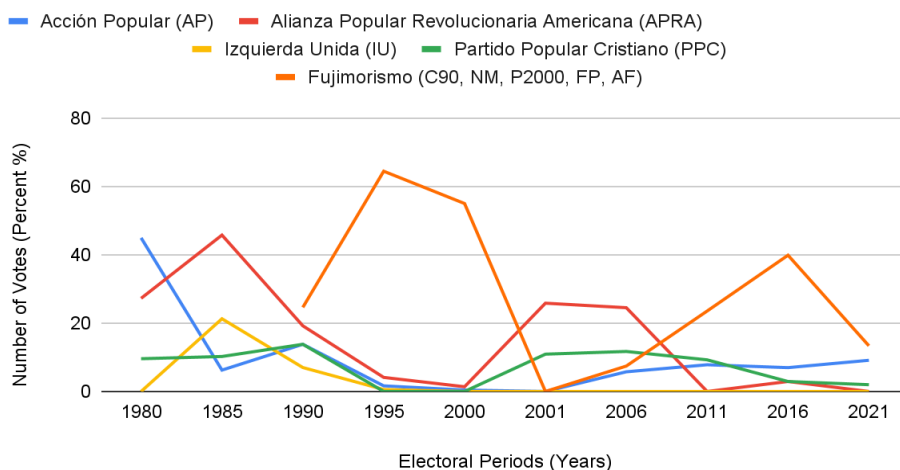
Graph 1 - Traditional Parties 1980-2021



Fujimorismo has been participating constantly since 1990, but has some inconsistencies in the number of votes. In 1990, it gained 24.60% of votes, and suddenly, in both 1995 and 2000, it skyrocketed to 64.42% and 54.97%, being the only single party that presents numbers of votes surpassing 50%. In 2001, Fujimorismo suffered a slight crisis. However, since 2006, there has been a gradual recovery in votes: 7.43% in 2006, 23.53% in 2011, and 39.85% in 2016. In the last 2021 elections, however, it got 13.36% of votes, which is lower than the two previous periods.

Graph 2 shows that Fujimorismo's tendency line is very similar to that of the traditional parties. It follows that pattern of increase, decrease, increase, and decrease again. The main difference would be that votes for traditional parties decreased during the years that Fujimorismo was at its highest, and the other way around as well. Therefore, there is a constant tense relationship between Fujimorismo and traditional parties all throughout 1990 to 2021.

Graph 2 - Traditional Parties vs Fujimorismo



In relation to personalistic parties, PP seems to be consistent in electoral participation and also grew in number of votes through the years. Similar to APRA, how can a party have such a low number of votes in a particular election, and then have such a higher vote during the consecutive election period?⁸ Eventually, after the PP first government from 2001 to 2006, the party declined greatly in the 2011 and 2016 elections, gaining only 7.81% and 1.31% of the vote.

Concerning SN, it has participated actively in presidential elections since 2000. Despite its alliances with PPC in 2001 and 2006, the party barely gained a little more than 10% in every election. Renovación Popular (RP), the successor of SN, gained 11.67% in the last 2021 election and ended in third place,⁹ which may mean hope for RP as an emerging political force in Peru.

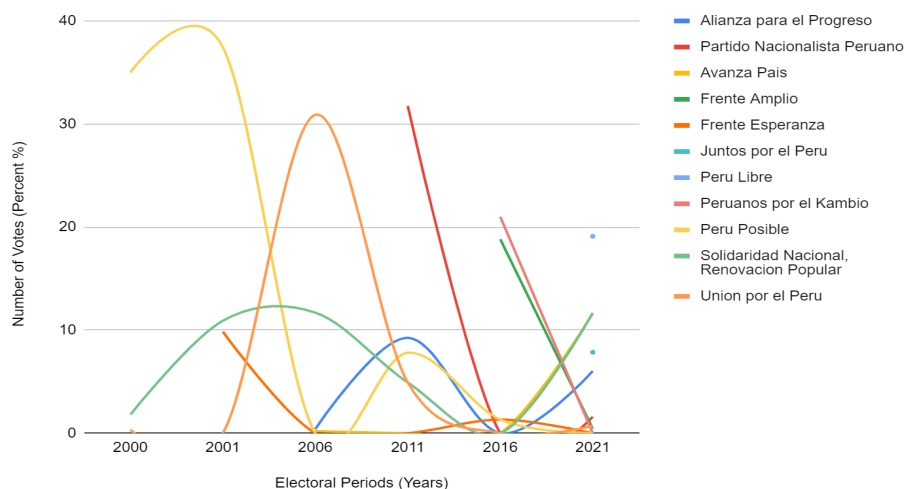
Other proto-parties would be, in the right: Peruanos por el Cambio (PPK), Avanza País, and Alianza para el Progreso (APP). On the left: Frente Amplio, Juntos por el Perú (JP), Frente Esperanza, Unión por el Perú (UPP), PNP, and Perú Libre (PL). All these parties are so new that

⁸After analyzing the 1995 and 2000 presidential elections, it can be seen that many parties (APRA, UP, UP, SL, IU, FRENATRACA, and PP) got their lowest voting percentage in those particular years. The answer for this common phenomenon would be the Fujimori regime, which affected parties greatly.

⁹Compared to other candidates, that score was technically high for the specific election (as the winner got 19.11%).

most of them only participated in two presidential elections so far, on average.¹⁰ Because of their low participation, it is difficult to specify a tendency or a rate of success throughout the years.

Graph 3 - Proto-Parties 2000-2021



Frente Esperanza is in crisis, never reaching more than 10% of votes, while Avanza País barely makes it to 11.60% in 2021. Concerning APP, it has very low numbers, not even making it to 10% in any of the three elections it participated in. Frente Amplio reached almost 20% of votes in 2016 (18.82%), but only got 0.45% (And JP, 7.85%) in 2021.

In relation to UPP, its votes declined from 21.81% in 1995 to 0.33% in 2000, the latest being their lowest in history. It recovered in 2006 (30.90%), but its power decreased heavily in 2011 (4.91%) and 2021 (0.70%). In relation to the PNP, it got 31.75% of the votes in 2011, and won the presidential palace. Same as with APRA and PP, after its time in power, the PNP would take part in the 2021 elections and gain just 1.59% of the vote.

Lastly, PL, even though it only participated in the 2021 election, represents the perfect

¹⁰UPP participated in four elections, APP participated in three elections, and PL, JP, and PPK in just one election.

example of what the main hypothesis tries to show. A personalistic vehicle, with no previous electoral history, founded after the 1990s, non-traditional, anti-elite, left-wing Marxist ideology, and mainly rural-oriented, this party won the 2021 presidential election with just 19.11% of votes. More information about the parties is revealed in the historical chronology and the second empirical analysis on the urbanization rates per presidential election from 2000 to 2021.

Historical Chronology

1821 to 1980: José de la Riva Agüero (Military) to Francisco Morales Bermúdez (Military)

Peru was born without political parties (LaNegra, 2021). The first governors of the Latin American nations were victorious generals from the period of emancipation wars, and since then, military headquarters seemed to be the natural form of government. This explains the low grade of democratic tradition in Latin America, as well as why the armed forces continue to be one of the few institutions with major internal cohesion (Mires, 2006, pp.3-4).¹¹

Military men governed Peru without pause from 1821 to 1872, and did not see an option in political democracy. They ignored the separation of powers, submitted Congress to their dominance, and did not even look to form a political party (LaNegra, 2021).¹² By the end of the 20th century, Peruvians had lived under military governments for two-thirds of their republican existence (Bowen, 2000), which definitely affected party development and consolidation.

Just towards the 1870s, the Partido Civil, the first party, began to take shape (LaNegra, 2021; Heredia Vargas, 2003, p.40) and tried to bring together various elites from different regions of the North Coast (Del Águila, 2009). Similar to the Partido Civil, democratic regimes in the 1940s and 1960s were associated with a political class that was mostly drawn from a small

¹¹The Armed Forces have traditionally played an influential role in Peruvian politics (Hudson, et al., 1993, p. 230).

¹²Peruvian generals like Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968-1975) pretended to develop a curious pattern between nationalism, populism, mass movements, and military dictatorships (Mires, 2006, p.4).

European elite (Levitsky, 1999; Sulmont Haak, 2017). By the end of the 19th century, four-fifths of the Peruvian population lived on the fringes of “official Peru” (Jochamowitz, 1994, p.328).

From the very beginning, there was difficulty in extending citizenship rights to the mass of the population (Crabtree, 2001). In the 1963 elections, Peru was the Latin American country with the smallest proportion of voters registered in the electoral roll: barely 18% of the population (LaNegra, 2021, p.108; Del Águila, 2009, p.45). The small European elite was never able to democratize Peruvian society because they refused to give up their privileges. They believed they *were* Peru, but seemed to portray the Anti-Peru (Jochamowitz, 1994, p.328).

In the Peruvian Andes, conflicts with the Quechua, Aimara, and Amazonian ethnic groups were frequent, as those sectors were not represented by political parties. In addition to their illiteracy,¹³ the Andes suddenly acquired less political importance (Del Águila, 2009). Political exclusion generated the problem of elections in which the main beneficiaries of urgent changes were not even able to vote. Furthermore, this discrimination also generated deep and longstanding inequalities (LaNegra, 2021; Crabtree, 2001) based on geography, race, and class.

The history of party politics in Peru in the 20th century starts with APRA, founded in 1924 by Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre (Barnechea, 1995, p.45; Hudson, et al., 1993, pp.41,225).¹⁴ This party advocated for anti-imperialism, Latin American integration, indigenism, and anti-oligarchic struggle (Sulmont Haak, 2017, p.164; Seawright, 2012, p.38; Heredia Vargas, 2003, p.42). Overcoming the death of its leader in 1979, APRA emerged as a leading center-left party (Kenney, 2003; Hagopian & Mainwaring, 2005, p.264) in the 1980s.

¹³Between the beginning of the 20th century and until 1970, Peru had an average illiteracy rate of 56.50%. In 1900, the illiteracy rate was 75.70%, which was three-quarters of the country. By 1970, this percentage was reduced to 29.60%. Still, this meant that at least one-third of the population was not eligible for voting (Thorp, 1998, p.354).

¹⁴APRA's initial political program promoted the formation of a popular alliance of intellectuals, sectors of the urban media, and the rural proletariat (Sulmont Haak, 2017, p.164).

AP was founded in 1956 by Fernando Belaúnde, and situates itself in the center-right to far-right of the political spectrum (Hagopian & Mainwaring, 2005, p.264; Sulmont Haak, 2017, p.170; Seawright, 2012, p.40; Heredia Vargas, 2003, p.41; Hudson, et al., 1993, p.225). Thirdly, PPC was founded in 1966 by Luis Bedoya Reyes, and has been located towards the center-right since its foundation (Hagopian & Mainwaring, 2005, p.264; Sulmont Haak, 2017, p.168-169; Cameron, 1994, p.19; Heredia Vargas, 2003, p.41; Hudson, et al., 1993, p.226). These three groupings are the only traditional parties that are still politically active up to this present day.

In the 1960s and 1970s, new left-wing parties were formed and made crucial advances in their connection with popular, communal, and syndical organizations. Most of them believed in the role of the armed struggle in the seizure of power, which involved a rejection of elections. In this period, various left groupings formed IU, an important political force throughout the 1980s (Sulmont Haak, 2017, p.162; Seawright, 2012, pp.41-42; Heredia Vargas, p.42). The convocation of elections in 1980 forced the left to choose between participating in the democratic process or abstaining and denouncing the elections as a trap created by the Military (Cameron, 1994, p.25).

Around this time, a group that rejected both democracy and elections would begin to organize in the 1970s. Having its origins in the middle of the excluded, poor, and marginalized populations of the Andes, this group would provoke one of the cruelest periods of violence in Peruvian history: Sendero Luminoso (LaNegra, 2021; Del Águila, 2009; Lefranc, 2004), founded in 1969 by Abimael Guzmán (Hudson, et al., 1993, p.54).¹⁵ Sendero appeared publicly for the first time on May 18th, 1980 (Bowen, 2000, p.92; Heredia Vargas, 2003; Hudson, et al., 1993, p.305), on the eve of the long-awaited general elections that ended the military dictatorship.

¹⁵Guzmán, a philosophy professor, blended the ideas of Marxism, Leninism, Maoism, and those of José Carlos Mariátegui, Peru's major Marxist theoretician.

In summary, from the beginning of the Peruvian Republic and up until the 1970s, there were many crucial events affecting parties and general politics. First, the low democratic tradition in Latin America was mainly the result of a strong military influence in government. Secondly, the problem of representation and inequalities left many citizens abandoned and without civic rights, while elites controlled the political life of the country.

Around this time, traditional parties were born. Similarly, as a result of the previously mentioned undemocratic scenario, new left-wing parties appeared in the political game, most notably Sendero Luminoso in the 1970s. Having now solid background information on these parties, it is time to describe their relationship and interactions during the decade following 1979.

1980 to 1990: Fernando Belaúnde (AP) and Alan García (APRA)

The commemoration of 100 years of Peruvian independence found citizenship that did not even reach women or the illiterate indigenous majority (LaNegra, 2021). This process of democratic struggle in civil society led the military government to call for presidential elections in May 1980 (Gambini & Surpachín, 2015, p.3), making Peru one of the first countries in South America to undergo the transition from long-term institutionalized military rule (Hudson, et al., 1993, p.207) to democratic government.

Most importantly, the Constitution of 1979 provided universal suffrage for the first time. The right to vote was extended to illiterate people, which implied the incorporation of an important group of citizens, especially from rural areas of the country (Crabtree, 2001, p.290; Sulmont Haak, 2017, p.147; Hudson, et al., 1993, p.212). Hence, Peru was finally turned into a democracy that incorporated all adults into full citizenship (LaNegra, 2021; Heredia Vargas,

2003).¹⁶ This Constitution also eliminated the system of indirect election of the President¹⁷ by introducing the second presidential round, raising the electoral threshold to more than 50% of the valid votes (Sulmont Haak, 2017, p.147). If no presidential candidate obtained more than half of the votes, there would be a call to a second-round between the two most voted candidates.

Throughout most of the 1980s, Peru possessed a relatively coherent, but young and weakly institutionalized, four-party system: AP, PPC, IU and APRA (Hagopian & Mainwaring, 2005, p.264; Levitsky & Cameron, 2003; Kenney, 2003; Sánchez, 2009, p.512; Seawright, 2012, p.47; Tanaka, 1998, pp.53,71). Although the strength of these parties has been a subject of debate, all possessed national structures, discernible programs or ideologies, fair representation capacity, and identifiable social bases. In the 1985 presidential election, the four parties collectively accounted for more than 90% of the vote (Freidenberg, 2016; Kenney, 2003; Del Águila, 2009, p.48; Tanaka, 1998, p.53; Hagopian & Mainwaring, 2005, p.267; Heredia Vargas, 2003, p.42).

The traditional parties became widely discredited by the late 1980s for a whole host of reasons (Sánchez, 2009). First, Peru was already suffering a strong economic crisis and, gradually, it began to stop being subject to credit during the AP government of Fernando Belaúnde (1980-1985) (Forsyth, 2018, p.81). In 1982 and 1983, prices for Peru's exports fell, and climatic conditions affected agricultural produce and the fishing industry (Cameron, 1994, p.42; Heredia Vargas, 2003, p.29). Furthermore, Belaúnde's administration exercised extensive state spending in infrastructure, which expanded the Peruvian State's already large external debt (\$9.6 billion dollars in 1980) to a new record of \$10.55 billion dollars by 1985 (Seawright, 2012, p.65;

¹⁶Between 1956 and 2016, the citizenship amplification tripled citizen participation in the lapse of 50 years (LaNegra, 2021, p.56).

¹⁷Until the elections of 1963, the President had to obtain at least one-third of the valid votes to be elected, otherwise the Parliament would choose the President among the three most-voted candidates.

Hudson, et al., 1993, p.54), generating an alarming economic problem for the country.¹⁸

This situation became worse later with Alan García's government (1985-1990), who inherited the leadership of APRA following the death of Haya de la Torre. Young and charismatic, García cultivated an enormous personal following that led APRA to the presidency in 1985 (Roberts, 1995, p.93; Gambini & Surpachín, 2015, p.4). Upon his arrival to power, he stopped paying the foreign debt (Forsyth, 2018, p.81), established price controls (Thorp, 1998; Roberts, 1995, p.93), and promoted extensive state spending to increase domestic demand (Seawright, 2012, p.66), which once again created a massive trade deficit.

Economic mismanagement during both governments contributed to a very difficult structural situation that eventually led to hyperinflation,¹⁹ and the deepest recession in living memory (Crabtree, 2001, p.290; Sulmont Haak, 2017; Barnechea, 1995; Kenney, 2003, p.1231). Between 1986 and 1990, Peru had an average inflation rate of 1,662.5%, and a growth rate of 2%. Yet, the 1980s ended with an inflation rate of 7,481.7% (Hagopian & Mainwaring, 2005, p.265; Heredia Vargas, 2003, p.56), being one of the highest in Latin America at that time.

Secondly, the insurgency of Sendero Luminoso went from being a small, rural, and relatively localized uprising to a much wider conflict involving both urban and rural spaces. They did not only declare war on the State, but on the party system as a whole (Crabtree, 2001; Sulmont Haak, 2017; Del Águila, 2009). Sendero destroyed infrastructure, caused many deaths, and sowed panic, scaring off potential national and foreign investors (Forsyth, 2018, p.81). At its peak, Sendero had 10,000 full-time combatants, the support of about 15% of Peru's population, and some degree of control over almost a third of Peru's municipalities (Seawright, 2012, p.61).

¹⁸During Belaúnde's term, per capita GDP fell by 11% and inflation accumulated to 3,584% (Kenney, 2003, p.1231).

¹⁹During García's administration, per capita GDP fell a total of 15%, and by his last year in office annual inflation had skyrocketed to more than 3,800% (Kenney, 2003, p.1231).

These twin crises had a devastating impact on the party system as a whole (Crabtree, 2010, p.364). By the end of Belaúnde's term, over 6,000 Peruvians had died from the violence, and over \$1 billion dollars in property damage had resulted (Hudson, et al., 1993, pp.54-55). Given Belaúnde's doleful performance,²⁰ the public desisted from entrusting national government to AP (Kenney, 2003, p.1231; Tanaka, 1998, p.107), and in the 1985 elections, AP barely managed to obtain 6.30% of votes (Sulmont Haak, 2017, p.170; Hudson, et al., 1993, p.226).²¹

Similarly, the crises also strongly affected APRA's militancy in the interior of the country. More than 1,000 party members were assassinated by Sendero, and by the end of his period, García's popularity fell even further than Belaúnde's (from 90% to 21%, having reached a low of 9% in 1989) (Kenney, 2003, p.1232). Therefore, electoral support for APRA declined significantly: 20% in 1990, 4% in 1995, and 1% in 2000 (Sulmont Haak, 2017, p.166).

Public rejection of AP and APRA was the greatest source of electoral volatility in 1985 and 1990 (Kenney, 2003, p.1232). The twin crises revealed starkly the limitations of both the State and those designated to manage it, and created a deep sense of instability at all levels of society. The weaknesses of the parties were exposed as they had not only failed to resolve the country's problems, but appeared to have worsened them (Crabtree, 2001, p.290; Tanaka, 1998).

Even though PPC was not directly involved in the twin crises, it also suffered chronic electoral weakness during the 1980s. One main problem was the perception of the PPC as extremely conservative, as it had an average score of 8.3 on a 10-point left-right scale, while the average respondent was located at 5.4.²² Another factor that contributed to its weakness was its socially exclusive nature, as most of its supporters came from the tiny upper and small middle

²⁰Belaúnde's approval rating fell from 75% in 1980 to 26% by 1985 (Kenney, 2003, p.1231; Tanaka, 1998, p.107).

²¹Sulmont Haak (2017) places AP at 6.20% of the vote in 1985, while Hudson, et al. (1993) place it at 6.40%. Still, the low percentage is portrayed in both cases as a way to display the political failure of AP.

²²None of the other parties were located farther from the average voter in 1987 than PPC.

classes in Lima (Kenney, 2003, p.1232).

Peru, even nowadays, has a high level of informal economic activity (Forsyth, 2018, p.164). The fast growth of the informal sector in the late 1980s encompassed more than 50% of the economically active population by 1990, which eventually weakened class-based organizations, eroded collective and partisan identities, and produced a growing pool of “floating voters” (Levitsky & Cameron, 2003, p.6; Sánchez, 2009, p.500; Crabtree, 2010, p.364).

In his book *El Otro Sendero* (1986), Hernando de Soto argues that the informal workers were victims of an interventionist state and impeded by bureaucratic red tape and legalisms. (Bowen, 2000, p.15; Ritter, et al., 1992, p.211; Hudson, et al., 1993, p.156). Class remained a powerful predictor of the vote, yet class-based parties were unable to retain the working class and the informal sector. Therefore, these groups lost interest in candidates of the left or right (Cameron, 1994, p.10), and became increasingly attracted to outsider candidates.

Parties had a difficult role to play in a country with such a wide breach between the State and society. The party system was poorly prepared to weather the twin challenges (Crabtree, 2001), which limited its capacity to build enduring linkages to the new emerging electorate (Levitsky & Cameron, 2003). Although both IU and APRA successfully appealed to the working classes in the 1970s and 1980s, neither of these forces was able to consolidate a stable base of support among the rural poor or the urban informal sector (Levitsky, 1999).

By the late 1980s, all parties had lost the capacity to attract broad-based support in a society that remained highly stratified along racial and sociocultural lines. Even parties that had once mobilized significant popular bases were perceived to have been co-opted into an aging and predominantly white, Lima-based oligarchic elite (Levitsky, 1999) that was increasingly out of touch with the day-to-day realities of most Peruvians.

So far, many events have happened during the 1980s. First, the Constitution of 1979 erased previous restrictions suffered by many ethnic groups. Secondly, the parties were described as weakly institutionalized because of the low democratic tradition already mentioned. Even though elitism was still prevalent, there were three new main external factors that would negatively affect traditional parties: economic crisis, political violence, and the growth of the informal sector, all which exposed the already mentioned weaknesses of all the parties.

1990 to 2000: Alberto Fujimori (Fujimorismo)

Peruvian parties found their deepest crisis in the 1990s with two disastrous administrations that brought deep distrust and poor effective government (LaNegra, 2021).²³ Although widely discredited, the established parties survived the 1990 election (Levitsky & Cameron, 2003), reaching around half the percentage (53.80%) of total votes.

On the right, writer Mario Vargas Llosa, along with AP and PPC, formed the Frente Democrático (FREDEMO), which presented his candidacy for the 1990 elections (Kenney, 2003; Hudson, et al., 1993, p.226). Vargas Llosa ran against Alberto Fujimori, the semi-unknown son of Japanese immigrants who came as a “perfect faceless” (Freidenberg, 2016; Jochamowitz, 1994, p.254; Hagopian & Mainwaring, 2005, pp.265,269; Mauceri, 1997; Roberts, 1995, p.92).

When Peru was totally devastated (Forsyth, 2018, p.93; Thorp, 1998, p.252), Fujimori surprisingly won the 1990 elections (Sulmont Haak, 2017; Freidenberg, 2016; Ritter, et al., 1992, p.138). Rallying with a newly created party named Cambio 90,²⁴ Fujimori’s rise to power became intimately linked to a widespread rejection of parties as both incompetent and corrupt (Crabtree, 2001; Hudson, et al., 1993, p.208, Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018, p.176). Like classical populists,

²³APRA’s government had no possibility of being reelected, as the economic chaos and increasing terrorist advancements undermined its electoral support (Bowen, 2000, p.21; Tanaka, 1998, p.162).

²⁴Cambio 90 lacked a program, a national structure, and a minimal activist base.

Fujimori's discourse was anti-elitist and anti-establishment (Roberts, 1995, p.97).

It is said that Vargas Llosa lost the elections because he was totally out of touch with Peruvian reality (Bowen, 2000), and had the mistake of abandoning the center (Tanaka, 1998, p.192; Agüero & Stark, 1998, p.211).²⁵ Vargas Llosa, like many other politicians, ignored the vast mass of real Peru (Barnechea, 1995, pp.377-378), composed by uncountable little minorities who were foreign to the official society and language of the creole elite.

For most Peruvians, predominantly Andean, Fujimori resembled them (Agüero & Stark, 1998, p.211; Barnechea, 1995, p.379). Indeed, Fujimori's facial features, "outsider" migratory status, and modest origins were more reminiscent of Peru's mestizo and indigenous majority than those of the Europeanized Vargas Llosa. Fujimori, then, was a leader who had emerged from the common people (Roberts, 1995, p.95) to offer a fresh alternative.

While President, Fujimori managed to maintain high levels of support (Crabtree, 2001) but generated the conditions for a complete democratic collapse (LaNegra, 2021). During most of the 1990s, Fujimori governed the country along with two non-elected agents of power: General Nicolás Hermoza, leader of the Armed Forces, and Vladimiro Montesinos, leader of the National Intelligence Service (SIN) (Crabtree, 2001, p.292; Mauceri, 1997; Bowen, 2000).

Fujimorismo represented a conservative and authoritarian side of Latin American populism, which was neither fully authoritarian nor properly democratic (Sulmont Haak, 2017; Crabtree, 2010). It included basic norms of democracy, but embodied strongly authoritarian features, such as concentration of power and a direct, top-down relationship between government and the mass of the population (Crabtree, 2001).

Pragmatism, authoritarianism, and secrecy were traits that autobiographically marked

²⁵More than for his ideological stances, Vargas Llosa just abandoned the center so that he could surround himself exclusively with representatives of the formal "white/criollo" elite (Agüero & Stark, 1998, p.211).

Fujimori's politics and government (Jochamowitz, 1994), as loyalty was all or nothing (Sulmont Haak, 2017; Crabtree, 2001). He painstakingly built a thoroughly corrupt political regime, where his operatives co-opted, bought off, harassed, intimidated, or persecuted political opponents in all relevant State institutions (Sánchez, 2009).

Having won the elections, Fujimori had no program ready for implementation, no real party behind him (Maeda, 2010, p.1130; Levitsky & Cameron, 2003; Bowen, 2000; Tanaka, 1998, p.20), and no majority in Congress (LaNegra, 2021; Bowen, 2000; Kenney, 2003). His initial support from APRA and the left quickly evaporated, and most leading sectors of the political, economic and religious establishment opposed him (Levitsky & Cameron, 2003).

Lacking experience (Ritter, et al., 1992, p.138), Fujimori opted for an authoritarian strategy to secure his political survival (Kenney, 2003; Tanaka, 1998, p.20). On April 5th, 1992, with the support of the Armed Forces (Gambini & Surpachín, 2015, p.5), the Government conducted a palace self-coup (autogolpe), shut down Congress, and captured the main institutions of power control. Soon later, the 1979 Constitution, which prohibited the immediate re-election of the President, was replaced by the 1993 Constitution, which introduced the figure of immediate re-election (Maeda, 2010, p.1130; LaNegra, 2021; Crabtree, 2001; Mauceri, 1997; Hudson, et al., 1993, p.208; Sulmont Haak, 2017, p.155).²⁶

The economic crisis and security problems helped Fujimori to impose the idea that the objectives of stability and order could not be achieved with the current institutions (Freidenberg, 2016). One of the pretexts for the autogolpe was the need for a reform of the judiciary, claiming that it was both inefficient and corrupt. Similarly, Fujimori claimed that parties were completely divorced from reality, and incapable of fulfilling their function of representing the people. Both

²⁶Immediate re-election allowed Fujimori to participate a second time in the 1995 elections.

arguments were accepted by Peruvians (Crabtree, 2001; Levitsky & Cameron, 2003; Bowen, 2000, p.127; Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018, p.191), who surely saw a savior in Fujimori.

In massively backing the coup, Peruvians converted Fujimori into a “democratic dictator” (Levitsky, 1999). The autogolpe signified the collapse of the party system, as it took place at a time when Fujimori’s popularity was on the rise (Sánchez, 2009; Levitsky & Cameron, 2003; Freidenberg, 2016). Public support for Fujimori jumped from 53% in March 1992 to 81% after the autogolpe (Levitsky & Cameron, 2003, p.8), and by late 1992, many Peruvians had decided that Fujimori was the sort of strong leader they had been waiting for.

Following the coup, Fujimori vanquished hyperinflation and reestablished the economy. Moreover, Sendero was crippled in 1992 with Guzmán’s capture, leaving the group disheartened and depleted. Fujimori’s extraordinary successes in combatting hyperinflation and terrorism eliminated the crisis conditions that previously legitimated authoritarian rule (Agüero & Stark, 1998, p.211; Bowen, 2000, p.161; Forsyth, 2018; Levitsky & Cameron, 2003, pp.93-94; Thorp, 1998, p.252; Hagopian & Mainwaring, 2005, p.275; Roberts, 1995; Hudson, et al., 1993, p.309).

Fujimori had his social base in the marginal sectors of Peruvian society: non-whites, evangelicals,²⁷ informal-sector workers, and the urban and rural poor (Levitsky, 1999; Bowen, 2000). Beginning in 1993, Fujimori used social spending to build support among the rural peasantry and the urban informal sector, mainly through welfare programs. Similarly, he spent much of his time traveling around the country (Agüero & Stark, 1998, p.211; Crabtree, 2001, p.296; Mauceri, 1997, p.902) and developing clientelistic networks (Mauceri, 1997).²⁸

Fujimori was the greatest adversary of the 1980s party system (Kenney, 2003, p.1230;

²⁷Fujimori perceived the importance of evangelicals, as they had useful connections in Peruvian rural zones. By the end of 1980, it was common to see evangelical tents at the center of forgotten towns in the Andes and Jungle.

²⁸The results of the 1995 elections, in which Fujimori won 64% of the votes, provided a vindication for this approach.

Crabtree, 2010, p.365; Sánchez, 2009; Mauceri, 1997), and took advantage of a weakened political class to concentrate power (Levitsky, 1999; Hagopian & Mainwaring, 2005, p.263; Mauceri, 1997, p.901). Fujimori was unique in confronting the parties rather than converting them to the new neoliberal message (Crabtree, 2010), and instead of building a political party, he created “disposable parties” (Levitsky, 1999; Freidenberg, 2016).²⁹

Lacking an organized base and without a party of his own (Mauceri, 1997, p.908), Fujimori avoided dependence on other parties and created a close alignment with the Military (Crabtree, 2001, p.292). In an increasingly chaotic environment, the Armed Forces were the only national institution that functioned efficiently (Bowen, 2000; Roberts, 1995, p.101), and the terrorist attacks gave them a genuine reason for being crucial in their political influence.

During the 1980s, candidate-centered electoral strategies were rarely an alternative to parties, but Fujimori’s achievements suggested that established party labels were no longer necessary for a successful political career (Levitsky & Cameron, 2003). As a result of Fujimori’s anti-political discourses against the parties, an “anti-system” attitude emerged in the country. This was visible in the proliferation of improvised, personalistic, and pragmatic organizations (Gambini & Surpachín, 2015, p.6) that emerged during Fujimori’s government.

The 1992 autogolpe was the point at which party representation was effectively broken (Crabtree, 2001; Kenney, 2003; Tanaka, 1998, p.229)³⁰ and traditional parties were replaced not by new parties, but by “independent movements” (Levitsky, 1999; Freidenberg, 2016; Tanaka, 1998, p.223).³¹ Politicians who wished to survive distanced themselves from previously

²⁹Disposable parties were minimalist organizations created for a single election and then discarded. Fujimori had as many as four different electoral vehicles to contest in different elections since 1990: Cambio 90, Vamos Vecino, Perú 2000 and Sí Cumple (Sánchez, 2009; Sulmont Haak, 2017; Hagopian & Mainwaring, 2005, p.278).

³⁰This was made clear in the 1995 presidential elections, when established parties could master 6.30% of the vote.

³¹Independent movements were personalistic campaign vehicles that were discarded after elections.

established party affiliations, and stood as independents (Levitsky & Cameron, 2003; Crabtree, 2001), generating a massive hemorrhaging of the established parties.

At the same time, many new and aspiring politicians began to create their parties instead of joining existing ones. Indeed, all the country's successful parties in the late 1990s were personalistic candidate-centered vehicles that lacked national structures or even minimal links to civil society (Levitsky & Cameron, 2003; Sulmont Haak, 2017).³² Although traditional parties participated in subsequent elections, they fared poorly. In 2000, all of the top candidates for the presidency were proto-party candidates,³³ and the traditional parties together received less than 2% of the vote (Kenney, 2003; Levitsky & Cameron, 2003, pp.9,12).

Along with this emergence of proto-parties, Fujimori brought other serious consequences for democracy. For example, the system of clientelism generated inherently weak loyalties, as it radically affected the integrity of the electoral process. Influencing the vote with favors and buying the will of voters is undemocratic (Latinobarometro, 2017, p.41), and when the economic rewards or other incentives ceased, support for Fujimori would evaporate (Crabtree, 2001).

Fujimorismo has left deep scars that will continue to undermine party system institutionalization in the future (Sánchez, 2009). By freeing himself from institutional constraints, Fujimori created major problems concerning regime succession and regeneration (Crabtree, 2001). The party system has disintegrated to a degree that is unrivaled in Latin America. Whereas in the 1980s the traditional parties accounted for roughly 90% of the votes, a decade later the same parties accounted for less than 10% of the votes (Levitsky, 1999, p.6).

³²Without an appeal that transcended the individual candidate, and without programs or ideologies to identify themselves, many of these new “independent movements” adopted names based on the locality in which they were competing (Levitsky & Cameron, 2003; Levitsky, 1999).

³³The only traditional party leader who even registered in the opinion polls was former president Alan García, and most polls placed him at less than 3% (Levitsky, 1999, p.6).

Although traditional parties bore a heavy responsibility for the crisis of the late 1980s, their absence in the 1990s created a political marketplace in which loyalties could be traded at great speed (Crabtree, 2001).³⁴ These parties have become virtually extinct: the left has disappeared from the political map, AP³⁵ and PPC are mere shells of what they once were, and APRA got reduced to a small, cult-like core of activists (Levitsky, 1999; Sulmont Haak, 2017).

In summary, it seems as if Fujimori was both a blessing and a curse for Peru. He effectively tore down inflation and terrorism while also displaying care for marginalized groups. Eventually, these successes made him really popular but also affected traditional parties. While these parties failed to solve the country's problems, Fujimori portrayed them as enemies of the people, which explains the shift to proto-parties. People got inspired by the Fujimori experience, and did not find party dependence as a necessity for gaining office. Therefore, many politicians left their parties and joined new ones, or created their own.

2000 to 2021: Valentín Paniagua (AP) to Francisco Sagasti (PM)

In September 2000, a release of a video showing SIN director Montesinos paying off a “transfuse” exposed the dark side of the Fujimori regime. This political scandal destroyed Congress as a functioning institution and damaged the President's already questionable electoral legitimacy. Seeing no other way out, Fujimori resigned, and within weeks the entire regime collapsed (Levitsky & Cameron, 2003; Freidenberg, 2016; Bermúdez-Tapia, 2020).

Under the leadership of Interim President Valentín Paniagua, Peru underwent a successful democratic transition. The institutions were reformed and media independence increased enormously, while hundreds of military officers were purged for their relationship with

³⁴Everlong-established mass parties like APRA in the 1990s operated at a very minimal level, having ceased to act as relevant conduits for public discontent and frustration.

³⁵During the Fujimori regime, the AP entered into a process of sharp electoral decline. Its candidates in 1995 and 2000 did not exceed 2% of the vote (Sulmont Haak, 2017, p.70).

Montesinos. Furthermore, Congress modified the Constitution to eliminate the figure of consecutive presidential re-election³⁶ and return to the provision established in 1979 (Sulmont Haak, 2017, p.156; Levitsky & Cameron, 2003; Freidenberg, 2016; Gambini & Surpachín, 2015).

This democratic transition culminated in new presidential elections on April 8th, 2001. All presidential candidates except García ran on tickets that did not exist before 1990, and most of these were candidate-centered vehicles with little substance (Sulmont Haak, 2017; Hagopian & Mainwaring, 2005, p.287). Meanwhile, the vestigial Fujimorista forces were virtually wiped out, gaining just four of 120 seats in Congress (Levitsky & Cameron, 2003, p.22).

After the end of Fujimori's regime in November 2000, Peruvians have lived a long period of respect for minimum standards of democracy. Four presidents assumed office after legitimate elections: Toledo, García, Ollanta Humala,³⁷ and Pedro P. Kuczynski (LaNegra, 2021; Sulmont Haak, 2017). In a real sense, democracy was restored with the 2001 election, but the party system has not been reestablished: mechanisms of representation remained weak, and personalism, electoral volatility, and party-switching remained high (Sánchez, 2009; Levitsky & Cameron, 2003), creating a "chaotic and unpredictable panorama." (Bermúdez-Tapia, 2020, p.207).

At this point in time, it is crucial to understand the situation of the surviving traditional parties. APRA depends a lot on Alan García's charismatic leadership, and without the emergence of alternative national leaders, it is difficult for the party to consolidate its institutionalization. AP, with the deaths of Belaúnde (2002) and Paniagua (2006), does not have recognized national leaders, and its organizational bases are very weak (Sulmont Haak, 2017).

³⁶The abuses of power committed by Fujimori caused the figure of re-election to be viewed with extreme distrust by a large part of the political actors, the country's intellectual elites, and sectors of the public opinion (Sulmont Haak, 2017, p.156).

³⁷Humala's party (PNP) depends a lot on the decisions and electoral projects of its leader. It lacks professional and technical cadres, nor does it have many leaders who have extensive political or parliamentary experience.

Lastly, PPC has difficulty generating greater electoral support beyond the capital, as most of its cadres and political leaders come from Lima (Gambini & Surpachín, 2015, p.22). Unlike other parties strongly dependent on the figure of its charismatic leaders, the PPC has been able to form alternative political cadres, but with restricted national scope (Sulmont Haak, 2017).

Overall, all traditional parties (with the only exception of IU) are still alive in the 21st century but seem to get worse as time goes on. They are losing support, their main leaders are dying, and, most importantly, they are quickly getting replaced by proto-parties.

2021 to Present: Pedro Castillo (PL)

The 2021 elections saw a deepening of the problems of democracy without parties, generating what Meléndez calls “mini-candidates.” These are political actors with low-intensity charisma, scarce political resources, and proto-parties highly dependent on them. One of these, Pedro Castillo, from PL, won the first presidential round with 18.92% of votes (La Negra, 2021, p.81), the lowest percentage for a winner in Peruvian presidential history.

Castillo rallied with a populist discourse that painted the heartless rich and the capital’s political class as enemies of the people, and promised to convene a constituent assembly “to create a Constitution that has the color, smell and flavor of the people.” (Muñoz, 2021, p.57). His populist discourse was effective in mobilizing mostly poorer and rural voters, in part due to their tendency to identify with his humble personal manner and origins (Muñoz, 2021). Furthermore, Castillo’s popular mandate depends on pushing reforms to please his supporters from rural areas and dissatisfy the Lima-based elite (Sposito, 2021).

The problem is that it is difficult for Peruvians to trust parties and their applicants, as the political offer is viewed with a mixture of suspicion and disdain (LaNegra, 2021). Political parties are currently the least trusted democratic institutions in Peru, with just a 11% level of trust

(Latinobarometro, 2017, pp.26-27). Nor have their leaders done well in the public eye (LaNegra, 2021; Bermúdez-Tapia, 2020), as most of them are currently involved in corruption scandals.

Reaching now the end of the chronology, it is important to exercise a deep reflection on the factors that affected party development and consolidation during these last 40 years of events. All traditional parties are almost nonexistent, with all their leaders dead, unwilling to form a real party, or involved in corruption. Most surprisingly, this is also the case with some proto-parties, which makes the democratic situation even worse, and that explains why satisfaction with Peruvian democracy and the political parties is so low.

With a better understanding of all the facts already mentioned, it is now easier to interpret the data portrayed in the first empirical section. There were many questions uncovered, and new information was found, creating a logical explanation for why Peruvian parties are weak. Therefore, it is now suitable to read the second empirical section.

Empirical Analysis (II)

This section measures the level of urbanization for every party's vote. By doing this, it can be determined where the parties get their votes from, and how and why some parties may receive more urban or rural support. In Table 1, there is already an analysis of the number of votes that every party had from the years 1980 to 2021, which serves as an adequate measure for party development and success in the political arena.

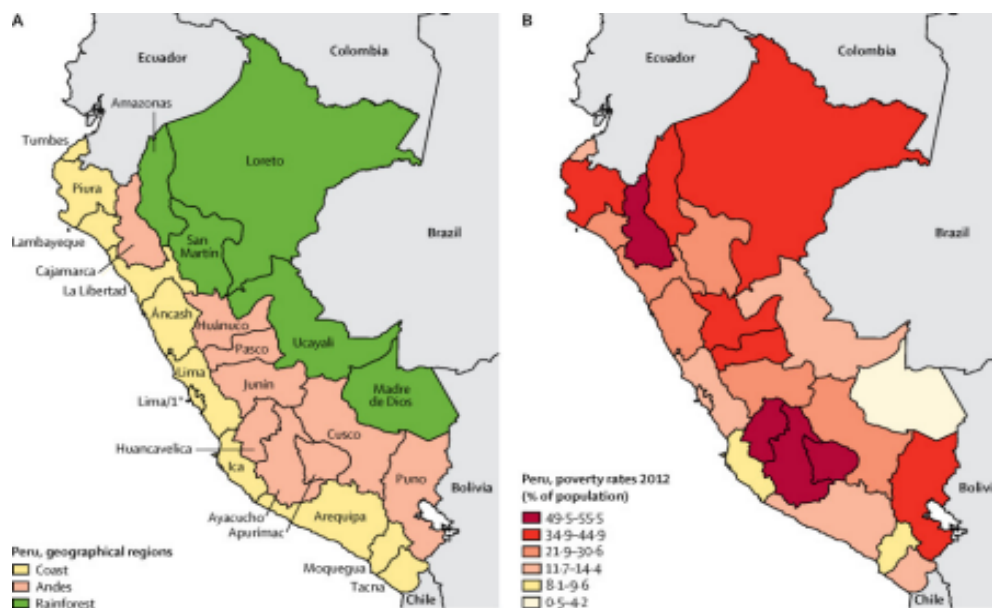
In this new study, there is an analysis by region. This method portrays more effectively and accurately the social, economic, and geographical differences in multiple Peruvian areas, which helps provide better urbanization voting results from 2001 to 2021. Therefore, this section answers the question: Are the votes mainly rural or urban?

The first variable used is the level of urbanization, which is measured by the number of

votes in every presidential election. This first variable is divided into four categories: rural, semi-urban, urban, high urban, and very high urban. Rural and semi-urban areas work hand in hand, and all the urban-plus divisions are comparatively homogeneous as well.

In Image 1, Peru displays 25 regions divided into three main geographical divisions: Coast, Andes, and Rainforest (or Jungle). As mentioned, all those regions are highly diverse concerning socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and geographical statuses. The rates and urbanization information were obtained from a platform called “City Population,” in which information from the Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (INEI) is included (Brinkhoff, 1998-2021).

Image 1.



First, rural regions are classified as having less than 50% urban population, meaning a predominantly rural majority. In this group, there are four regions in total: Huancavelica, Apurímac, Cajamarca, and Amazonas. Three of these regions are Andean regions which, besides being the most rural regions, are also the ones with the highest poverty rates in Peru.

Second, semi-urban regions are those that have between 50 and 60% of urban population. These are four regions, all of which belong to the Andes: Ayacucho, Puno, Cusco, and Huánuco.

Again, it is surprising that there are no regions from the Coast that belong to any of the two categories. Besides the fact that access to the sea helps with urbanization (Robert, 2019),³⁸ it can be implied that many of the Andean regions did not develop urbanistically because of the lack of attention and discrimination that the State had against minority groups that lived in those regions.

Third, the urban regions are the ones that have a level of urbanization that ranks between 60 and 85%. This is the biggest category because it includes 10 regions in total. Contrary to the previous cases, there are only two regions that belong to the Andes (Pasco and Junín). Four regions belong to the Jungle (San Martín, Madre de Dios, Loreto and Ucayali) and four regions belong to the Coast (La Libertad, Lambayeque, Piura, and Ancash).

Fourth, in relation to the high urban regions, those have between 85 and 95% of urban population. As may be expected, all those regions belong to the Coastal geographical division: Moquegua, Tacna, Arequipa, Ica, and Tumbes. The high urban regions are relevant because most of the early votes before the 1979 Constitution came from those areas.

Finally, there are only two regions that belong to the very high urban category, which have a percentage that goes above 95% urban. In both cases, there is Lima and Callao. Both regions have vital importance because many of the traditional parties were mainly Lima-centered, the party elites lived in Lima, and most of the voting population at the beginning of the Republic was from Lima. It is also relevant to mention that one-third of Peru's 23 million population lives in Lima. Hence, what happens in Lima is relevant when analyzing Peruvian politics.

Moving on, the second variable is political parties. The level of urbanization in participatory, electoral ways (y variable), depends on the political party (x variable). In general

³⁸The shores, seas, and oceans have been identified as large environmental scenes with great importance for humanity (Robert, 2019, p.7). The sea, which is highly valued in contemporary societies, is therefore the determining factor in the originality of coastal urban systems and coastal urbanization (Robert, 2019, p.15).

terms, most traditional and conservative parties tend to receive their votes from the urban sector, and most proto-parties and left-wing groups gain their votes from a predominantly rural sector.

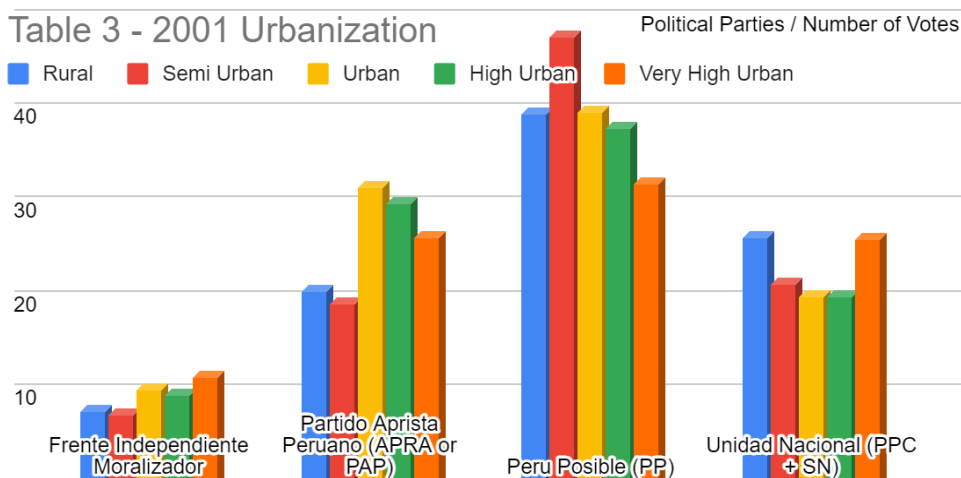
There are two main categories in every party: most voted regions, and least voted regions. The three main and three least voted regions in relation to the number of votes were placed in each category. Afterward, all rural and very high urban regions were added to the list.³⁹ Other regions were also added and placed in their respective categories. Eventually, after summing up and dividing all percentages, a definitive result was obtained for each urbanization category. Furthermore, the category with the most percentage result was highlighted, as a way to know if the party was mainly urban-oriented or rural-oriented.

During the calculation process, accuracy was of the utmost importance. Specifically, with parties that occupied the first places in presidential elections, more regions were added to calculations for greater accuracy. After having all the numbers, the results were inserted on a specific year table, with two rows of variables: urbanization category and political party. By doing this, the average result of every urbanization category per party was clearly visible. There are six tables in total, one for each election period from 2001 until 2021.⁴⁰

³⁹If they were not there yet, the four rural regions (Apurímac, Huancavelica, Amazonas, and Cajamarca) and the two very high urban regions (Lima and Callao) were added. In all elections and all parties, it was a requirement to have all those six regions in the calculation, so that a more accurate representation of the voting population could be present.

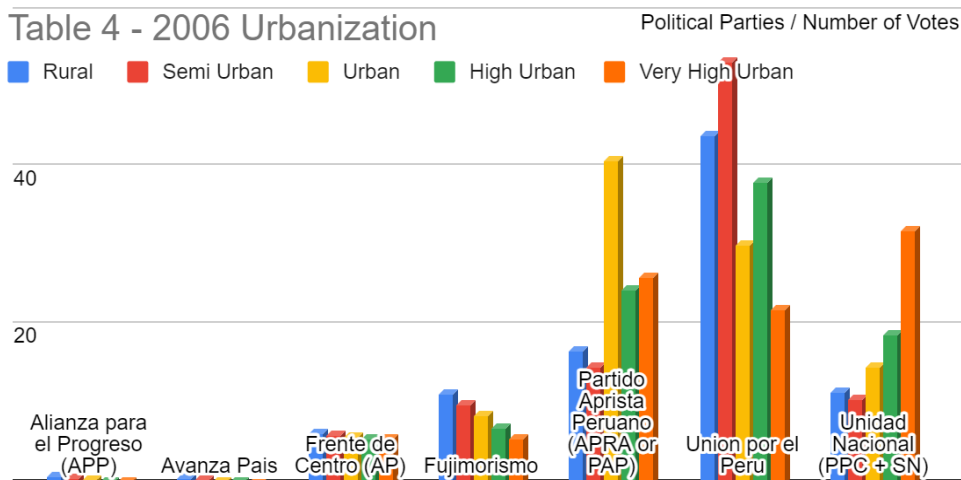
⁴⁰The URL link to all calculations are in one citation (Chávez Linares, 2021) in **References**.

Table 3 - 2001 Urbanization



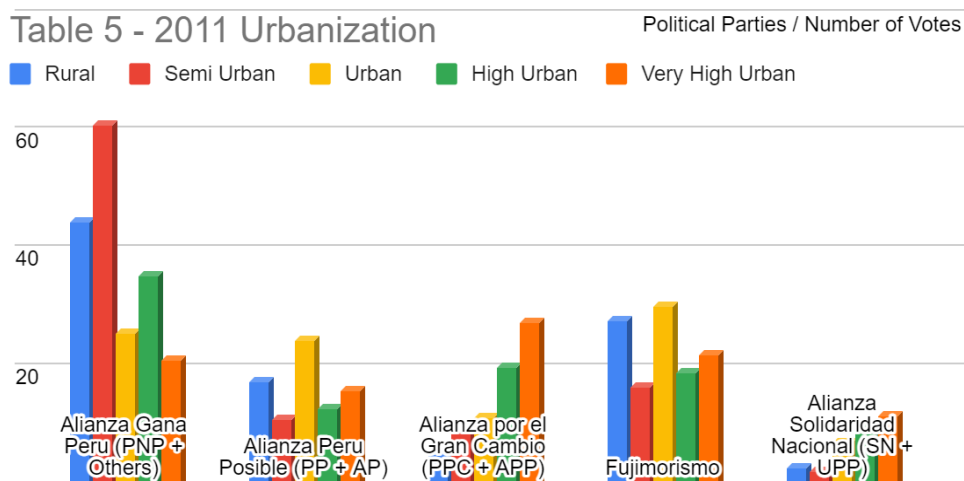
In Table 3, PP is in first place, with a rural vote majority of 39.55%, and a semi-urban vote of 47.63%. APRA has an urban majority in all respects, being around 30% of the votes in both urban and high urban categories. PPC seems to be exactly in neither position with votes at the same rate in both urban and rural, and surrounding 20% of the votes for each category.

Table 4 - 2006 Urbanization

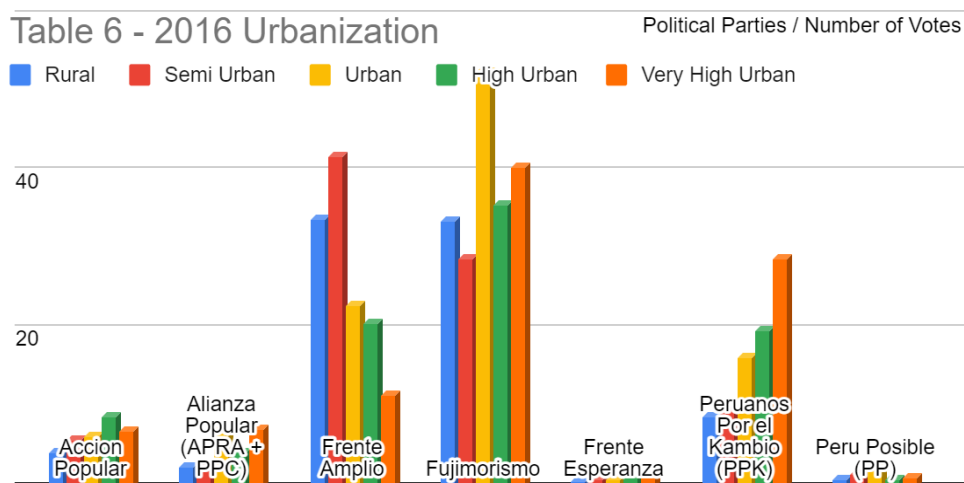


In Table 4, the same pattern can be observed. UP, whose rural and semi-urban votes surpass 40%, ended up in first place during the first presidential round. In relation to APRA, it remains a highly urbanized party (with 41.16% in urban, and 16.80% in rural). Similarly, PPC is very highly urban (32.25% of votes), and less rural (11.72%). Even though these two traditional parties are mainly urban at this election, they still have a decent vote percentage, with 24.50%

(APRA) and 11.70% (PPC). An exception would be made with AP, as it only gained 5.75% of the total vote, which makes its urbanization calculation difficult for this specific election.

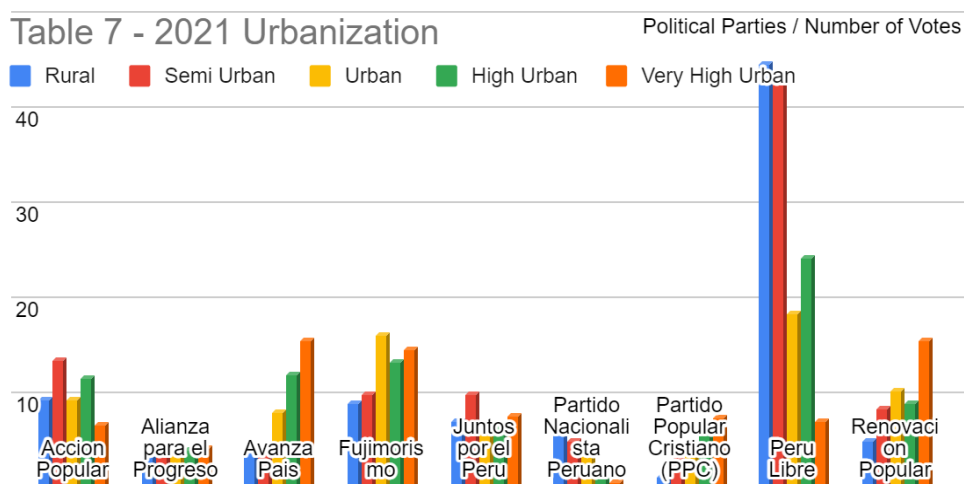


In Table 5, the same pattern is repeated. Alianza Gana Perú, with proto-parties from the left, and with a majority rural vote (rural, 44.83%, semi-urban, 61.24%) and low urban vote (very high urban, 21.38%), ended up in first place. On the other hand, traditional parties still remain urban and low in voting. PPC remains very high urban (27.75%, 5.55% rural), while AP is just average urban (24.64%). APRA did not participate in this election.



In Table 6, the same pattern continues. Frente Amplio, with a rural majority (rural 33.90%, semi-urban 42.01%), is among the first places and has low urban vote (11.64% in the

very high urban category). In relation to traditional parties, they have less than 10% of the vote, with an urban majority and a rural minority. AP gets 8.32% in high urban and 4.41% in rural, while Alianza Popular (APRA+PPC) gets 7.29% of the urban vote, and 2.58% of the rural vote.



In Table 7, with the right extremely divided, a huge victory for PL can be witnessed. This party has a great average majority of rural (44.65%) and semi-urban (43.80%) votes, while having a low urban percentage (urban 18.45%, very high urban 7.13%). All other parties show an average of around 10% number of votes per urbanization rate. Only two traditional parties appear: PPC and AP. While PPC is still an urban party, AP seems to shift from urban to rural. Its highest percentage is 13.46% in semi-urban, and its lowest is very high urban, with 6.74%.

It could be implied that most urban votes were directed towards other right-wing parties, such as Fujimorismo, Avanza País, and RP (instead of AP). Effectively, all those three parties show very high urban votes surpassing 10% of the electorate. Either way, at this point in time, there is consistency on how left-wing and proto-parties, with a rural majority, tempt to win elections and gain political power. Similarly, traditional and conservative parties, with the urban majority, tend to decrease in power and number of votes through time.

Conclusions and Synthesis

In conclusion, Peruvian democracy is in danger because the political parties are an almost pure form of candidate-centered politics, they are not properly organized, and have been controlled by self-interested individuals. The poor amount of democratic experience in the Latin American population is a crucial factor that explains the parties' lack of organization and strength. Another factor is the constant discrimination and denial of representation exercised by some political elites, which generated social struggles, inequalities, and brought new anti-system options into politics. Furthermore, the lack of party discipline and politicians' incapacity to govern generated deep distrust and a negative image of the party system for Peruvian citizens.

Therefore, traditional parties turned into proto-parties, which generated even more chaos in the political arena. Proto-parties generally gain more votes than traditional parties, but they are short-lived, and always get replaced by new parties of the same nature. Because there are many personalistic vehicles that get created at every election, there are always new options for voters, who many times do not know what to expect, and choose a newly formed party because they think it will bring some type of change or reform in the country.

In relation to some solutions or ideas that could help alleviate the situation, parties should come together and avoid personalism by aspiring to reach higher goals instead of just competing for the presidency. This cut on multipartidismo is crucial because "a smaller number of parties limits fragmentation and creates predictability for votes." (Rosenbluth, & Shapiro, 2018, p.250). For example, the last 2021 election, if four or five parties have basically the same ideology and political stance, they should, instead of forming coalitions, combine themselves as just one party.

When talking about research limitations, the urbanization data by region just provides information from 2001 to 2021, meaning that there was no possibility of finding votes per region

from 1980-1995. Secondly, in the historical chronology between 1821 to 1980, general information such as military regimes and social inequalities are mentioned, but there are many more events that affected party development and democracy during that long period of time.

With this in mind, future research could be related to the origins of Peruvian democracy, with a narrow focus on the 19th century and the first years of independence. Furthermore, a deeper study on the urban-rural conflict in Peru's party development could be another topic to explore. Based on the tables produced, it would be interesting to know how the country's regional landscape really affects parties and political life in general.

Similarly, another research topic could be based on the conditions that allow democracy to flourish or collapse. In this paper, the discussion is mainly about Peruvian party politics from 1980 to 2021, but it would be interesting to do research merely on democratization from the first decades of the 20th century up to 1980. By doing this, there would be an opportunity to explore in more depth the relationship between military men and the democratic process.

Finally, more studies could be developed in relation to the country's democratic projection. After analyzing these last 40 years of party development, some scholars could formulate a hypothesis of what could happen with Peruvian democracy in the near future. More than mere speculations or scientific theories, the Peruvian case could also serve as a model or useful resource for studying and predicting current political events around the world.

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