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Political Science 140

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Case Study: Peru

Summary

The end to Peru's long history of military rule began in 1978 with the formation of the constituent assembly. Major historical events such as the 1854 rebellions that contributed to the rise of voting clubs, occupation by Chilean troops, Alberto Fujimori's self-coup, external factors such as the United States and political demonstrations contributed to its transition to democracy. The struggle to democratize is partly due to their colonial history which had citizens ability to mobilize and demand change. Although the country had shifted away from military rule, the military had a major influence on political institutions and elections. Citizens relied on electoral violence in order to have control over political elections, in doing so they lost participants (Forment, 2013).

Peru's constitution was influenced by the United States such as term limits, presidential election by popular vote, and separation of powers (Hudson, 1992). Political actors such as Augusto B. Leguía y Salcedo ignored the constitution and contributed to the centralization of power, the incremental transition continued with the overthrow of President Fernando Belaúnde Terry in 1968 which led to a military regime that was left-wing progressive. The constitution became more progressive for example the guarantees of civil liberties and freedom expression allowed for future political involvement and government opposition (Hudson, 1992). Due to the

many restrictions such as government ability to use libel laws against journalists and suspend rights and freedoms during a government emergency the shift towards democracy has been slow.

Throughout its history, Peru has struggled with income inequality and an ever-changing global economy which had adverse effects on the economy and the effectiveness of leaders. Resignations such as secretary-general Joaquín Ramírez were very common because of Peru long history of being controlled by a military regime that continuously shifted power and reshuffled. Its shift of power was towards a fragile democracy that reverted when Fujimori was elected.

The economy had a great influence on Peru sustained it's democracy. As the economy failed a transition of power was imminent. Peru has been filled with corruption and scandals and of which has adversely affected the indigenous population and although there had been backlash very little has been accomplished. There has been movements from below such as violent protest that had very little success. Such problems has led to polarization (Freedom House). Despite this protest and economic inequality Peru has maintained a democracy by appeasing the masses through expansion of social programs.

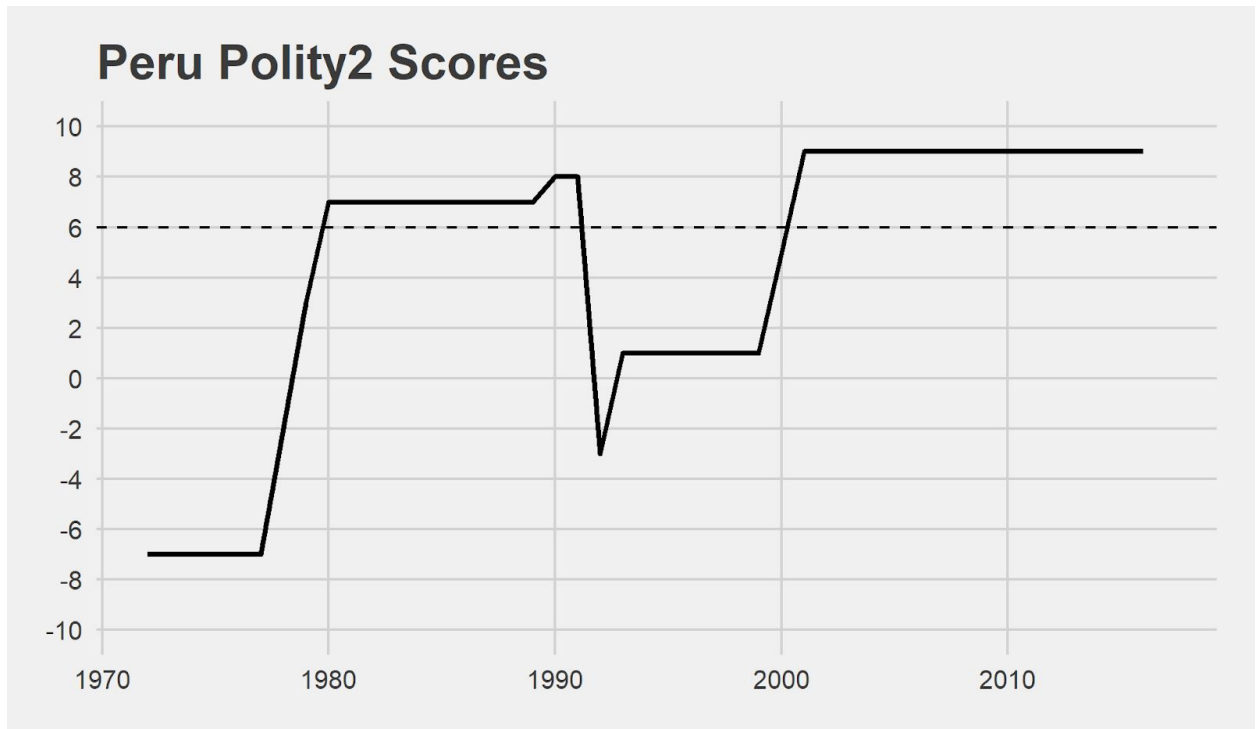
Polity 2

Overall Peru has gradually shifted to democracy despite its colonial history. Historically we note that General Juan Velasco Alvarado ruled from 1968 to 1975 this contributed to its low polity2 score. The military regime adopted left-leaning policies in order to appease the citizens, through land reform and therefore redefining the role of the military. After World War II Peru was an exporter and this made it susceptible to the international markets and foreign influences. The interest of the military did not align with Peru's rich, this was due to the fact that the military

was composed of people from lower income groups. The agrarian reform had a major impact on the culture of Peru.

Land reform created economic opportunities and political consciousness. (Hunefeldt, 2010). In 1975 the violent events unfolded which required military intervention this in turn led to Velasco being replaced with General Francisco Morales and a growing elite split. As problems accumulated Morales created the constituent assembly whose goal was to remove the military government. Presidential elections were held in 1980 this was one of the contributing factors for the rise in polity2 score.

The election of Alberto Fujimori in the 1990s had a major impact on the polity2 score. Fujimori was endorsed by the left but ended up breaking his campaign promises. He suspended the constitution and began to privatize public enterprises (Hunefeldt, 2010). He failed to win a 3rd term due to troubles with the economy due to the agricultural crisis created by el Nino natural disaster. In response, Fujimori became more authoritarian and would silence political opposition by controlling the media. Due to corruption, Fujimori resigned and his reign came to an end.



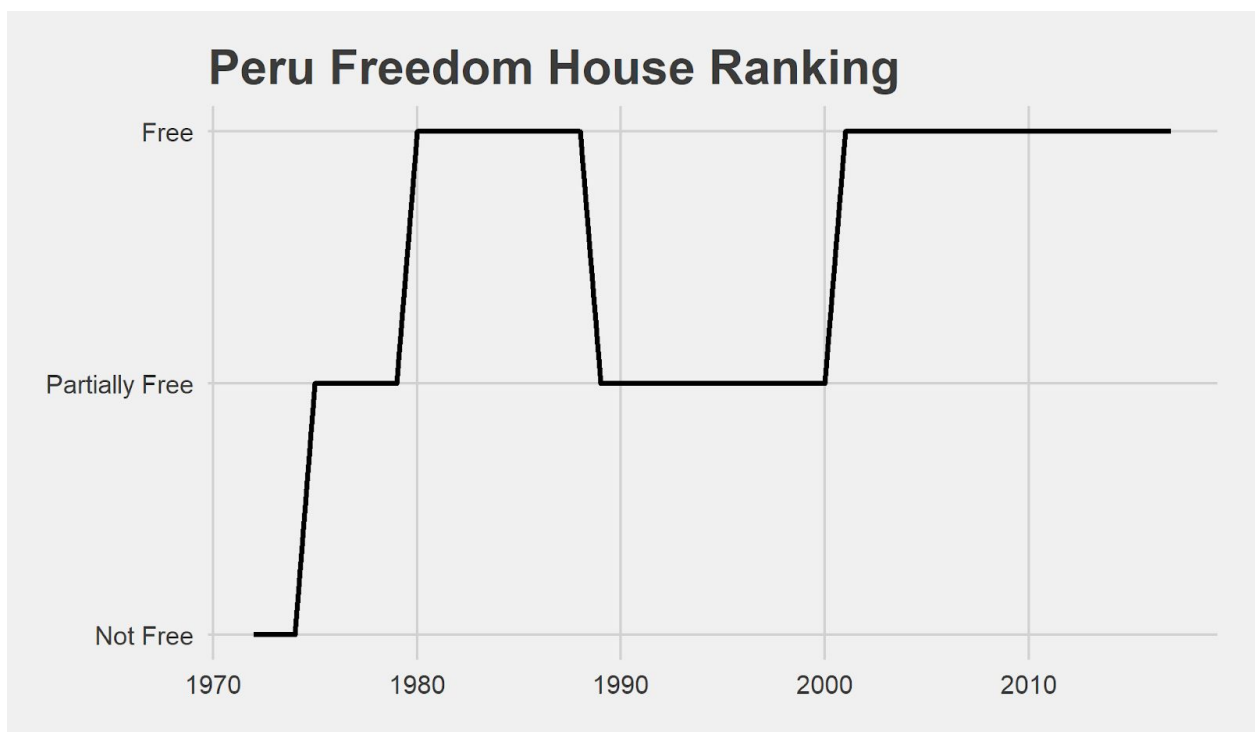
Freedom House

The political rights during the 1970s were very limited due to Velasco's military regime. Velasco created union organization to appease the poor. The creation of the National System of Social Mobilization was initiated by the regime, to mobilize masses. This organization was used to silence opposition. The creation of such an organization was created to gain more control over the political process, but in reality, the masses had no political rights. (Hunefeldt, 2010). The existence of multi-party political parties in the 1980s contributed to a partially free ranking.

Civil Rights in Peru increased as political movements that started in the 1970s and continued to gain traction especially because of Fernando Belaúnde Terry regime who supported the expansion of education and funding and contributed to increasing enrollments. Belaúnde tried to suppress the Shining Path that started at the Huamanga university. Due to the inefficiency of Belaúnde regime, many political parties emerged to fill the discontent of the

masses. This, in turn, led to more political participation and therefore higher freedom house rankings. Belaúnde peacefully transitioned power in doing so contributed to a higher ranking.

Peru's Civil liberties such as freedom of the press are limited in that government officials may oppose and intimidate journalist. The news market is controlled largely concentrated in the hands of *El Comercio* conglomerate. This decreases makes peru fall in rankings. There has been multiple constitutions and currently freedom of assembly is allowed but limited to a peaceful assembly, and it is up to the government to determine who meets such definition (Freedom House)



Democracy-Dictatorship Index

In a democratic dictatorship index, we find that Peru was a democracy until 1989 reverted back to dictatorship until 2001 where it once again became a democracy. The chief executive in the early 1980s was Belaúnde who is called the father of Peru's modern democracy.

His attempts to decrease military power and his peaceful transition of power led to Peru being labeled as a democracy by the democracy-dictatorship index. In the 1990s the election of Alberto Fujimori regime which is labeled as dictatorship personalist regime. Fujimori proceeded to privatize public enterprises and suspend the constitution, in turn, giving himself power over the country.

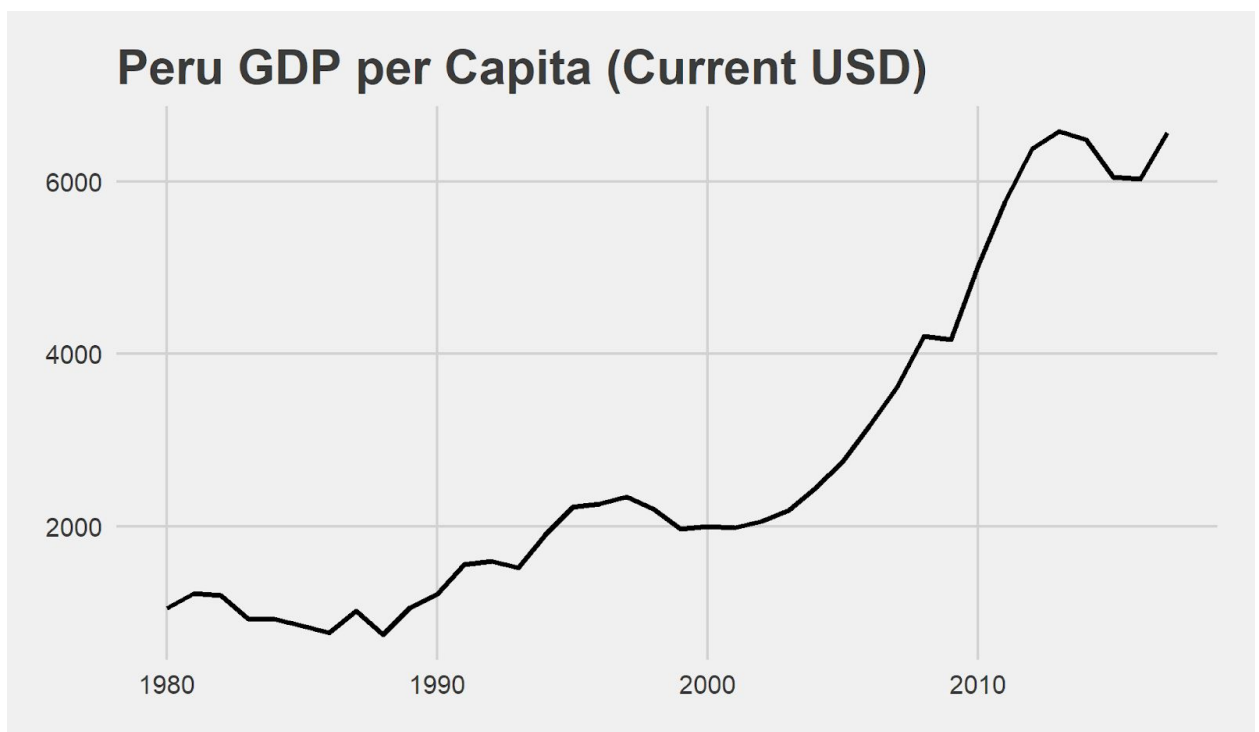
Social Determinants

The colonial history of Peru explains its long history of military regimes. During colonial times being politically active was nonexistent as the regime-controlled everything when given the opportunity to participate citizens had no interest in doing so. An idea that helps explain Peru's transition to democracy is the democratization bias, this is due to Peru's historical background of shifting between civilian and military rules as well as the countless constitutions that contain some democratic attributes. A social determinant to democratization that explains why Peru struggled to shift towards democracy is its inability to sustain a civilian government, this is due to military control of political institutions, and colonial culture. As the culture began to shift such as the rise of voting clubs and the election of Manuel Pardo an anti-government candidate, a path towards democracy was set in motion (Forment, Carlos).

Economic Determinants: Survival Story

The idea that economic inequality has no effect on democratization as discussed by Teorrel may explain why most Peruvians indigenous people that were too poor to pay taxes had no interest in getting politically involved, but in trying to solve inequality led to political corruption such as allocation of resources to subsidize wealthy townships (Forment, 2013). The economy of Peru has remained strong since 2001. Continued economic growth has contributed to

the maintaining of their democracy(Teorell 2013). As explained by Taft-Morales “Deep social divides over how to pursue this aim have continued to undercut political stability”. Ollanta Humala who served as president from 2011 to 2016 had the ability to work on eliminating the economic inequality through government policies. (Taft-Morales, 2016). The polity2 score and the GDP are very closely related, where downturns in gross domestic product decrease democracy. In 1989 by the democratic-dictatorship index Peru reverted back to a dictatorship this may be due to it slow economic growth. As their economic well being increased such as in the 2000s after the ousting of Fujimori Peru transitioned to democracy.



Transitions from below and above

Fujimori ruled as a personalist leader that took control of the government by suspending civil rights and the constitution. The economic troubles of his regime made him lose support, in turn, he was vulnerable to scandals and his corruption was exposed. Vladimir Montesino who

served under Fujimori was exposed to the public through a video that displayed his corruption (Hunefeldt, 2010). The immense amount of corruption led Fujimori to resign, he was named in the most wanted list of Interpol this meaning that his corruption and discontent of the public forced external forces to take a side. Alejandro Toledo election was due to the actions of the Peruvian Congress and his successful mobilization of the youth through his aprista party.

The election of Fujimori is complicated in that he ran as a populist who opposed the privatization of public enterprises and supported demilitarization but proceed to self-coup and break promises. By opposing the masses Fujimori created new adversaries who organized against him in turn creating a more competitive field.

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Hunefeldt, Christine. *A Brief History of Peru*. Facts On File, 2010.

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