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The 2011 general elections in Peru[☆]

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1. Background

Peruvians went to the polls on 10 April 2011 to select a new president and a new slate of legislators.¹ Peru's president serves a five-year term and is prohibited from consecutive re-election, so the incumbent Alan García was ineligible to compete. In case no candidate garnered a plurality of the votes in the first round of balloting, a runoff was scheduled for 5 June.

Peru's 130-member unicameral Congress is renewed in its entirety every five years, concurrent with the first round of the presidential contest. Members are elected from each of the country's 25 departments,² with seats allocated by population and ranging from one seat in Madre de Dios (pop. 92,000) to 36 in Lima (pop. 7.6 m). The congressional seats are assigned to parties by proportional representation using the D'Hondt formula and a 5% threshold. An alternative to the 5% nationwide threshold is that a party must win 5% of the congressional delegation of at least two departments. Voters can use preferential votes to determine the order of candidates within each party list.

[☆] Editor's Note: Due to an administrative error, two notes were commissioned on the recent Peruvian elections. In order to be fair to both authors and to recognize the time they spent on this work, we publish both in this issue. Apologies to Professors Lupu and Schmidt for the duplication. Hopefully, readers can benefit from having alternative perspectives on this eventful contest.

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¹ Also elected were Peru's five delegates to the Andean Parliament.

² Peru is split into 24 departments, but for electoral purposes the Province of Callao also has department status.

2. Candidates and parties

The combination of García's unpopularity and internal party disputes meant that his own party, the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (*Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana*, APRA),³ failed to offer a successor candidate. Mercedes Aráoz Fernández, García's Minister of Economy and Finance, was nominated by the party in November, but she withdrew her candidacy less than two months later. More generally, the Peruvian party system has long been unstable – Mainwaring and Scully (1995) classified it as “inchoate” – with new parties emerging regularly as electoral vehicles for individual politicians. So it is no surprise that five candidates, with the backing of a variety of parties and cross-party alliances, were competitive in this contest. Altogether, ten candidates competed for the presidency and 13 parties presented congressional lists.⁴

Three candidates competed for the mantle of continuity with the major policies of the García administration. The most prominent of these was Alejandro Toledo, who preceded García in the presidency and whose moderate economic policies García had largely left in place. Backed by his Possible Peru (*Perú Posible*) party, Toledo staked out a centrist position. Despite his lead in the early days of the campaign, he was heavily criticized for his allegedly lavish lifestyle and accused of abusing alcohol and cocaine. Still, as the first person of indigenous descent to be elected

³ APRA considers itself a regional movement, so its official party name is the Peruvian Aprist Party (*Partido Aprista Peruano*).

⁴ An eleventh minor candidate withdrew just weeks before the election, but remained on the ballot.

president in Peru, he continued to appeal to some rural poor voters.

Leaning in a more centre-right direction was Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, a former official of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, as well as Toledo's Minister of Economy and Finance and then Prime Minister.⁵ Kuczynski and his newly-minted Alliance for Great Change (*Alianza por el Gran Cambio*) emphasized maintaining macroeconomic policies but promised to fight corruption, to legalize the country's large informal sector, and to double spending on education. The Alliance brought together four centrist and centre-right parties, including the Popular Christian Party (*Partido Popular Cristiano*) of Lourdes Flores, a prominent presidential contender in 2006. Kuczynski appealed mostly to urban middle-class voters, seen by poor Peruvians as a political insider and a rich *gringo* (he holds an American passport).

The third centrist candidate was Luis Castañeda, a popular former mayor of Lima initially considered the campaign favourite, backed by the National Solidarity Alliance (*Alianza Solidaridad Nacional*). The Alliance included his own National Solidarity party as well as the centrist remainders of the parties that had backed the leftist Ollanta Humala in 2006 and former president Alberto Fujimori in 1990. Castañeda's platform differed little from those of Toledo and Kuczynski, and his lack of charisma and lacklustre campaign limited his appeal to Lima and its environs.

The anti-incumbent candidates were those seen to be ideologically more radical. On the left was Humala, a former army officer who had lost the 2006 runoff election to García by a razor-thin margin. Humala, now backed by his Peru Wins (*Gana Perú*) party, moderated many of his 2006 stances, comparing himself with Brazil's moderate Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva instead of Venezuela's fiery Hugo Chávez (*Schmidt, 2007*). He even replaced the red shirts he had worn in the earlier campaign with a suit and tie. But while he diligently vowed to continue existing macroeconomic policies, he stressed the need for broader social policies in his "letter to the Peruvian people."⁶ He promised to raise the minimum wage, impose a windfall tax on mining companies, and provide pensions for the elderly.

On the opposite end of the spectrum was Keiko Fujimori, a member of Congress and the daughter of imprisoned former president Alberto Fujimori,⁷ backed by her party, Force 2011 (*Fuerza 2011*). Her campaign repeatedly referenced the more popular aspects of her father's tenure, including his successful fight against insurgent groups and his massive redistributive programmes. Naturally, she made little reference to his authoritarian impulses and his administration's rampant corruption, though she previously suggested that she would consider pardoning his conviction for corruption and human-rights abuses.

⁵ The Prime Minister in Peru is the head of the cabinet, appointed by the president and approved by Congress.

⁶ The letter was apparently based on a similar move by Lula in his first successful presidential campaign in 2002. Indeed, Humala hired some of Lula's campaign advisors.

⁷ Keiko Fujimori had served as the country's First Lady after her parents divorced in 1994.

Surrounded by her father's advisors, she was widely expected to follow his mix of pro-business policies, broad social programmes, and hardline anti-crime strategies. And she seemed to attract many of his supporters, including business and media elites as well as the rural poor. Reports even emerged during the campaign that the Peruvian intelligence services were supporting Fujimori's campaign.⁸

3. Issues

Under both the Toledo and García administrations, the Peruvian economy had improved steadily. Between 2001 and 2011, GDP grew on average 5% annually, despite the global recession. Poverty rates fell considerably and employment increased particularly in the exporting regions along the Pacific coast. These improvements were due in part to the boom in prices for Peru's abundant mineral commodities: gold, silver, and copper. But they were also the result of government policies that maintained price stability and attracted investment and trade.

Still, the distribution of these economic gains was far from equal. Access to basic public services was uneven and unemployment rates remained persistently high in the southern and central highlands. Many poor voters were therefore unsatisfied with the status quo and looking for an alternative, more redistributive economic model. While the three moderate candidates – Toledo, Kuczynski, and Castañeda – promised some expanded social policies, Humala and Fujimori clearly represented more dramatic deviations from existing policies.

A related concern was the prevalence of social conflict. Conflicts had been arising frequently in the poorer highlands, where mining companies and police clashed with local, often indigenous, communities over environmental and economic issues. During García's administration, these conflicts reportedly led to over 190 deaths. Humala proposed to fight these conflicts by involving local communities and labour unions in decision-making over resource extraction. The three centrist candidates, meanwhile, offered shades of continuity with García's strategy of sending police and the military to break up conflicts. The most hardline position came from Fujimori, who recalled her father's success in forcefully quelling rural insurgencies.

4. Results

Turnout for the April election was about the same as in the 2001 and 2006 electoral cycles, at 83.7%. With five competitive candidates, there was little doubt that the presidential contest would require a runoff. As the first round approached, polls showed Kuczynski, Humala, and Fujimori ahead of the rest. In the event, Humala and Fujimori took the top shares of the vote and prepared to compete in the runoff (*Table 1*). The three main centrist candidates combined garnered nearly 44% of the vote, primarily from voters in and around the capital city. But

⁸ *Diario 16*, 23 May 2011.

Table 1
Results of presidential elections in Peru, April and June 2011.

Candidate	Party	First round		Second round	
		Votes	Votes (%)	Votes	Votes (%)
Ollanta Humala	Peru Wins	4,643,064	31.7	7,937,704	51.4
Keiko Fujimori	Force 2011	3,449,562	23.6	7,490,647	48.6
Pedro-Pablo Kuczynski	Alliance for Great Change	2,711,332	18.5		
Alejandro Toledo	Possible Peru	2,289,540	15.6		
Luis Castañeda	National Solidarity Alliance	1,440,242	9.8		
Other candidates with less than 1%		104,065	0.7		
Total		14,637,805	100.0	15,428,351	100.0
Blank votes (% of total votes)		1,477,696	(8.8)	116,335	(0.7)
Null votes (% of total votes)		584,233	(3.5)	921,711	(5.5)
Total votes (turnout)		16,699,734	(83.7)	16,466,397	(82.5)
Registered electorate		19,949,915			

Source: National Office of Electoral Processes (<http://www.elecciones2011.onpe.gob.pe/>).

having split the centrist vote, all three failed to qualify for the runoff. The second round of the presidential contest was thus to be fought between the relative extremes of the ideological spectrum, Humala and Fujimori. Mario Vargas Llosa, the Nobel laureate and former presidential candidate, called it a choice between “AIDS and terminal cancer.”⁹

Both candidates turned to courting moderate voters. Humala continued to moderate both his proposals and his rhetoric during the runoff campaign. He backed away from earlier promises to block exports of natural gas, instead assuring voters that he would respect existing contracts. He also took on some of Toledo’s economic advisors and courted the former president’s tacit endorsement. Fujimori also made some attempts to moderate her position, admitting “mistakes” made by her father and promising to respect his conviction. Yet this concession, on the heels of an unfavourable poll, was at best half-hearted since she also referred to her father as “Peru’s best president”. Thus, despite the legitimating endorsements of Kuczynski and Castañeda (and tacit support from outgoing president García), Fujimori was inexorably linked to her father’s legacy. Indeed, at her victory rally following the first round of voting, supporters chanted her father’s popular nickname, “Chino.” Memories of the rampant corruption of the latter’s tenure led several prominent conservatives – Vargas Llosa among them – to back Humala. Throughout the runoff campaign, Humala emphasized Fujimori’s links to her authoritarian father while she in turn highlighted his radical past.

On the eve of the runoff election, election polls showed Humala and Fujimori in a statistical tie. With turnout almost identical to the first round, Humala won the close election by a margin of less than three percentage points (Table 1). The number of blank and null votes declined dramatically from the first round, suggesting that voters either felt more compelled or found it easier to choose a candidate in the runoff.

The legislative election results largely mirrored the first-round presidential voting. This is unsurprising given that the

parties and alliances competing for congressional seats were largely electoral vehicles for the presidential contenders. As a result, Humala’s Peru Wins took the largest proportion of votes, followed closely by Fujimori’s Force 2011 (Table 2). Toledo’s Possible Peru and Kuczynski’s Alliance for Great Change attracted roughly equal vote shares, a few percentage points ahead of Castañeda’s National Solidarity Alliance. Because of malapportionment in the allocation of seats to each department, these vote shares do not translate perfectly to seat allocations. Indeed, the parties with greatest support in overrepresented rural regions – Fujimori’s Force 2011, Toledo’s Possible Peru, and particularly Humala’s Peru Wins – garnered a greater share of seats than their share of the vote.

Relative to the previous Congress, the biggest gains were made by Force 2011 and Possible Peru, owing no doubt to the increased prominence of their presidential candidates. In 2006, Toledo was barred from re-election and Fujimori did not run.¹⁰ Humala’s Peru Wins, which had benefited from his earlier presidential bid, made only modest gains in Congress. All these gains came primarily at the expense of García’s APRA; with no presidential candidate to headline it, APRA lost almost all of its congressional seats. The fact that APRA – once considered Peru’s only institutionalized party – was unable to retain its seats without a presidential candidate suggests that its apparent comeback in 2006 was more the result of García’s electoral success than voters’ support for the party itself.

5. Implications

Peru’s stock exchange plummeted 12.5% in the days following Humala’s second-round victory, and the president-elect’s honeymoon of popularity dissipated in a matter of weeks. But he moved quickly to reassure markets by naming moderates – some from the outgoing García administration – to key economic posts. He also went on a foreign tour that pointedly omitted Venezuela. Striking a conciliatory tone, he told reporters he would

⁹ The 2006 runoff between Humala and García, whose 1985–90 administration ended in economic disaster, was similarly presented by the Peruvian press as a search for the lesser of two evils.

¹⁰ Alberto Fujimori had tried to contest the 2006 presidential race from exile in Tokyo but was eventually disqualified by the electoral authorities (Schmidt, 2007).

Table 2

Results of legislative elections in Peru, April 2011.

Party	Votes	Votes (%)	Seats	Seats (%)	Change
Peru Wins	3,245,003	25.3	47	36.2	+2
Force 2011	2,948,781	23.0	37	28.5	+24
Peru Possible	1,904,180	14.8	21	16.2	+14
Alliance for Great Change	1,851,080	14.4	12	9.2	-2
National Solidarity Alliance	1,311,766	10.2	9	6.9	+4
American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA)	825,030	6.4	4	3.1	-32
Radical Change	347,475	2.7	0	-	+0
Fonavists of Peru	170,052	1.3	0	-	+0
Other parties with less than 1%	405,829	3.2	0	-	+0
Totals	12,839,144	100.0	130	100.0	
Blank votes (% of total votes)	1,737,059	(10.4)			
Null votes (% of total votes)	2,125,133	(12.7)			
Total votes (turnout)	16,701,336	(83.7)			
Registered electorate	19,949,915				

Source: National Office of Electoral Processes (<http://www.elecciones2011.onpe.gob.pe/>).

consider pardoning Alberto Fujimori on humanitarian grounds if the former president's health deteriorated. Humala's rapprochement with Toledo and Possible Peru, both during and after the runoff campaign, is clearly a pragmatic attempt to build a legislative majority bloc.

Maintaining such a coalition will require a delicate balancing act. Members of Humala's own Peru Wins have already criticized the new president's economic appointments, an ominous sign that they have no intention of following the president to the ideological centre. Toledo and Possible Peru are reluctant to formalize an alliance, concerned not to hamper their own electoral chances in five years' time. To be effective, Humala will need to

balance the need to convince markets (and Possible Peru) of his commitment to moderate economic policies with the need to reassure his supporters and his party that he will not renege on promises to redistribute the fruits of Peru's economic growth and resource wealth.

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AIDS or cancer?: The 2011 Peruvian elections

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1. Background

After a decade of economic decline and increasing political violence, Peruvians elected a political outsider,

Alberto Fujimori, to be their president in 1990. Fujimori had considerable success in tackling Peru's formidable problems but he systematically undermined the country's democratic institutions and was openly contemptuous of political parties, relying instead on a series of electoral vehicles that he and his advisors tightly controlled. The main challenge to him came from various independent movements built

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