

THE POLITICAL DISCOURSE
OF FUJIMORI'S COUP D'ÉTAT –
PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES OF DEMOCRACY IN PERU

Carlos Eduardo Pérez Crespo
Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú
cperez.crespo@gmail.com

Peru has a long history of democracy's breakdowns where the construction of political discourse has been very important to legitimize authoritarian measures. Therefore, this article analyzes Alberto Fujimori's discourse in the last Peruvian coup d'état in 1992. Owing to the fact that authoritarian discourse could become legitimate once again in a future political or economic crisis in Peru, this research concludes that the Peruvian government should consider the real importance of the issue of political order in contemporary politics.

1. Introduction

Political discourse analysis has been absent in Political Science's researches about Peru and fujimorism.¹ However, its role as a political strategy to gain political support in the public sphere is significant so as to understand the authoritarian legitimacy in the last Peruvian self-coup d'état that was in April of 1992.

In that occasion Alberto Fujimori closed the Parliament with the support of the Army, the business leaders and the majority of Peruvians who were disappointed about the political system and the economic policy (cf. Cotler 2000, p. 20). Thus, in that occasion, Peruvians showed a feeling of deception in the public sphere which allowed the support for Fujimori's authoritarian political discourse and the attack to Fujimori's detractors:

¹ At the moment there are eighty-one articles about Peru in the main American Reviews of Comparative Politics. They refer to the following themes: fourteen are about political participation, thirteen about market reforms, thirteen about political regime, nine about state and public policies, nine about political violence and terrorism, five about political institutions, four about indigenous movements and fourteen about other topics (cf. Dargent 2008, pp. 27-28). Furthermore, fujimorism has been analyzed principally through three main perspectives: the social structures, the political institutions and the political agents (cf. Vergara 2008)

'Denial and deception became the defining features of public life in Fujimori's Peru' (Conaghan 2005, p. 6).

For this reason, our main purpose is to show how the consecution of political order in moments of crisis is fundamental for the consolidation of democracy in Peru. As Peruvian history shows, indeed, it is common to believe that the only solution to political crisis is the authoritarian decision of a plebiscitary leader (cf. Murakami 2007, pp. 123-126).

Furthermore, along with the report of the Latinobarómetro of 2007, only 8% in Peru believes that all Peruvians have the same opportunities of access to justice, 14% trust political parties and 17% are satisfied with democratic changes. As a result, 72% are unsatisfied with the basic services of the State (Latinobarómetro, <http://www.latinobarometro.org>). In consequence, the support for democracy in Peru is less than in the past years, hence it is important to study one of the most unsatisfied countries in Latin America.

In this sense, our research is...

...based on the recognition that politics cannot be conducted without language. Equally, the use of language in the constitution of social groups leads to what is called "politics" in a broad sense. (...) Political situations and processes can be linked to discourse types and levels of discourse organisation by way of four strategic functions as an intermediate level. We proposed the following four functions: (i) coercion; (ii) resistance, opposition and protest; (iii) dissimulation; (iv) legitimisation and delegitimation (Schäffner 2004, pp. 117-119).

This article examines, consequently, these levels of political discourse between Fujimori's arrival to the presidency in July in 1990 and the coup d'état on April 5th 1992. The methodology of the research is the following: 1) we will describe how Fujimori's government takes action; 2) how it has to legitimize its action delegitimizing its detractors; and 3) how it finally creates a political discourse to legitimize itself and its measures in the public sphere.

As we will see, Fujimori developed a deep critique to political parties, Human Right's organizations and constitutional democracy which allowed him to legitimize itself as a strong leader who imposed authority and political order in the country. So...

Fujimori frequently justified heavy-handed solutions to Peru's multiple crises as the 'only' solution to Peru's problems, and repeatedly attacked politicians, trade unions, human rights groups –even democracy itself, which he resignified as 'party-cracy' to imply it had been corrupted to its core by party elites and special interests. In this context, space for the defense of human rights and of basic democratic values (such as due process) was increasingly marginalized (Burt 2006, p. 44).

Firstly, the article describes the context of the Peruvian crisis at the beginning of the nineties and, then, develops Fujimori's political discourse between July 1990 and April 1992. Secondly, we analyze the Fujimori's discourse in the coup d'état. Finally, we depict some problems and challenges of democracy in Peru.

2. Fujimori's discourse between July 1990 and April 1992

This section has three parts. In the first one Fujimori developed a discourse of consensus when he became president, but he changed it when his government announced the economic 'shock' on April 9th and finished when he proposed military courts to fight against the subversion in December.

The second began in January and finished in September in 1991 when he criticized Human Right's organizations and political parties because he said they opposed the government. Fujimori accused them of being against the pacification of the country.

Finally, Fujimori criticized political parties, Human Rights and constitutional democracy between November of 1991 and April of 1992, arguing that these three would block the will of the government and the Peruvian people to finish the political and economic crisis in the country.

2. 1. Political consensus but attacking political parties (July-December 1990)

At the beginning of the nineties Peru experienced one of the most profound crises in its history because of three main problems. In first place, Peru had a severe hyperinflation- the annual rate of inflation reached 7649.60 in 1990 (Tanaka 2002, p. 50). In second place, there was political violence owing to the 3452 deaths which were caused by the conflict between state

and terrorism in 1990 (Kenney 2004. p. 28); and finally, there was also poverty and extremely poverty conditions that reached more than forty per cent in the country (Murakami 2007, p. 79). In this context, Fujimori won the national elections of 1990 as an 'outsider', since he had no political party and he used an anti-political system discourse in his campaign (cf. Kenney 1998).

Evolution of the Inflation in Peru (1988-1999)	
Year	Annual rate of inflation
1988	1722,3
1989	2775,3
1990	7649,6
1991	139,2
1992	56,7
1993	39,5
1994	15,4
1995	10,2
1996	11,8
1997	6,5
1998	6
1999	3,2

Source: Tanaka 2002, p. 50.

In these circumstances, Fujimori had to achieve three aims: a) the economic stabilization, b) the return to the financial community and c) to execute the antisubversive policy (cf. Murakami 2007, pp. 273-274). However, the main aim was the economic stabilization because people perceived it as the major problem of the country in 1990 (Murakami 2007, p. 225). So, in his first Congress speech as President on July 28th 1990, he stated:

The people chose us in order that we restore a new language of national understanding, which is the language of dialog, conciliation and search of consensuses (...) We have to confront the deepest crisis that the country has passed through in all its republican history (*Congress Speech*, 28 July 1990, <http://www.congreso.gob.pe/museo.htm>).²

² The Congress Speech references have been translated by us.

Thus, Fujimori began his government with a consensus's discourse calling all the political forces to help him in this purpose. Furthermore, he extended the discourse to subversive groups:

The dialog even with terrorists- as long as they quit the fight- shouldn't be seen as sign of weakness. People have chosen me to look for the unity of Peruvians, including the ones that are mistaken (Ibid).

However, this calling to consensus was broken when Fujimori announced the economic 'shock' on August 9th 1990.³ The reaction of the political opposition was to criticize the government, as they argued the shock would affect the personal economy of the people, but Fujimori answered 'I am not a servant of political or economic interests. I only obey to the people' (in the newspapers, 25 August 1990).⁴ Henry Pease, from the opposition, said that 'after this message we can suppose that the possibility of consensus was ended for the government' (in the newspapers, 26 August 1990).

Nevertheless, we have to highlight that, despite the fact the economic 'shock' was object of a lot of criticism; Fujimori could legitimize his measures because his government diminished the hyperinflation to 5.9 in November and because of this, 59% and 61% of the people in Lima approved him in November and December, respectively (Murakami 2007, p. 252). Therefore, Fujimori could legitimize his economic measures delegitimizing the opposition and political parties. He claimed he was pragmatic and anti-political, in a way his government could resolve people's economic problems while political parties couldn't do the same. About old politicians he said they 'refuse to lose old privileges which they have used

³ The economic shock was an orthodox economic measure to stabilize the economy, 'one such policy was price deregulation in which price controls were eliminated and the price of public service goods skyrocketed. The intention of this program was to push the price level so high that consumer demand would fall and subsequently remove inflationary pressure. Although this policy did not initially work as easily as intended, inflation did eventually decrease. Trade liberalization, including sharp decreases in the protection of imports and the elimination of subsidies and differential tax advantages for exports and rural development was also a key component of Fujimori's economic policies' (Newbold 2003). Furthermore, this one initiated the process of market reform in Peru, which "refers to measures that reduce state intervention in the economy, especially by eliminating or loosening different types of regulations and restrictions (such as import prohibitions and tariffs, labour laws, and rules on foreign investment), by privatizing public enterprises, and by shrinking the public bureaucracy' (Weyland 2002, p. 13-14).

⁴ The newspapers' references have been taken from the editions of *Resumen Semanal* (N.580 del Año XIII - N.667 del Año XV). It makes a selection of the most important political news of the week. Here we use the numbers published between July 1990-April 1992. They are also our translation.

to receive and surprise to see that technical issues displace political issues' (in the newspapers, 29 August 1990).

In conclusion, Fujimori said his pragmatic solution of the economic crisis was the most important thing for the people; for this reason, the Minister of Economy, Juan Carlos Hurtado Miller, stated 'there has come the hour of saving the country' (in the newspapers, 28 August 1990). Fujimori's discourse, in this sense, was legitimized as pragmatic and efficient while political parties were presented as the contrary.

2. 2. Human Right's organizations and political parties as enemies of the country (January-September 1991)

On December 6th of 1990, the president Fujimori said he would present a modification of the Constitution in order that the military courts judge the important crimes of terrorist violence, because it would be an effective measure to safeguard the society. However, the majority of political leaders were in opposition to the legislative proposal emphasizing that this one violated the Human Rights. Therefore, APRODEH (Association pro Human Rights) reacted saying that the presidential plan 'does not have legitimate substance' (*La República*, 8 December 1990) and Javier Diez Canseco said the presidential action was a 'new globe test' (*Novedades*, 8 December 1990).

However, Fujimori's discourse argued, once again, that Fujimori's measures were pragmatic and effective to fight the subversion. In this sense, the Internal Affairs Minister, Adolfo Fournier, said that 'there are some mass media and also some elements that act as *tontos útiles* (useful idiots) who only support the subversion' (*La República*, 4 January 1991). That is to say 'Fujimori created an 'us versus them' framework that played on and stoked popular disgust with the political class's failure to address Peru's problems' (Burt 2006, p. 46).

In addition, is important to highlight that in December of 1990, 55% of the people in Lima agreed with the military courts measures; whereas 31% said to be against. This happened because 78% in Lima said that terrorism had created fear in the country, 39% were sure that it would increase and 32% affirmed it would stay on the same conditions in the next years (*Apoyo, Informe de Opinión*, December 1990). In this way, Fujimori tried to show himself as strong president who was fighting to triumph over the terrorism with pragmatic measures.

This attitude, although, would bring him some problems. On August 6th, 1991 the government of the USA decided to stop the military help to the Peruvian Army for the fight against the drug trafficking, due to the continuous violations to Human Rights. Such measures made Fujimori quit using his discourse of attack and demonstrate the advances of the government's policies in Human Rights.

For this reason, on September 9th of 1991 some parliamentarians of the USA visited the country to observe the progress in this field. In this opportunity they congratulated Fujimori for the government's achievements, especially for the creation of Human Right's offices at all levels of the police, and for the restoration of the dialog with the organizations that watched the Human Rights in the country (in the newspapers, 10 September 1991).

In this way, Fujimori's government seemed to be aware of the importance of the defence of Human Rights. Nevertheless, after Peru returned to the financial international community on September 12th, because the IMF approved its economic policy, Fujimori turned back to his discourse, suggesting that this achievement showed that political parties and Human Right's organizations only had wanted to destroy the country criticizing the government:

Nothing was achieved not paying the debt to international organizations of development... The only thing that we obtained was to use up our capitals and stop the maintenance of infrastructure (of the country) (in the newspapers, 14 September 1991).

In conclusion, Fujimori returned to his 'us versus them' discourse and used it to delegitimize the Human Right's organizations and political parties, because he suggested that they represented instability and chaos, so the detractors of the government were the enemies of the country. The majority of the people agreed with these arguments because they saw the achievements of the government, therefore, Fujimori could start with a discourse against all his detractors in September of 1991.

2.3. Hostility to Human Rights, political parties and constitutional democracy (November 1991-April 1992)

Fujimori explicitly began his discourse against Human Rights on September 23rd of 1991, when in a military meeting he stated:

We know that terrorists, their facade organizations or their useful idiots are not going to resign, and they are going to use all the possible resources to damage the image of Peru adducing that the Army violates systematically Human Rights. This one is the principal resource of the main violators of Human Rights in Peru. (...) Why don't they condemn the death of innocent children after the explosion of car bombs prepared by the MRTA? Why don't they denounce the atrocities of Shinning Path (SL) against the rural communities? (In the newspapers, 24 September 1991).⁵

Fujimori's discourse suggested that Human Right's violations are not only perpetrated by the State, but principally by the terrorists and those who are their supporters. That is to say, the enemies of the country would be not only the terrorists but also their supposed protectors: the Human Right's organizations that obstruct the pacification with their criticism to the government.

After these statements International Amnesty denounced the situation of the Human Rights in Peru in a letter to the president George Bush on September 26th (*Expreso*, 28 September 1991). Besides, on September 29th the Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos (National Coordinator of Human Rights) said in an announcement: 'As Human Right's organizations we reject the language and substance of the presidential judgment for being insulting, not contributing to the dialog and false' (*La República*, 29 September 1991). Nevertheless, Fujimori answered by delegitimizing these organizations linking Human Rights with poor people's rights:

I have listened from the mouth of the *cocaleros* (coca leaf growers) leaders the defence of the fundamental concepts of the Human Rights, in their own language, and they accuse these defenders who keep their silence when crimes are committed by SL (...) Come here (indicating towards the ground) in order that before speaking you get to know this reality, and stop working in offices with carpets, as they have said; because here is the defence of the Human Rights (*El Comercio*, 15 December 1991).

⁵ The MRTA and the Shining Path were the principal subversive groups in Peru. Their actions caused thousands of deaths throughout the eighties, but these diminished after the arrest of its major leaders.



Source: Kenney 2004, p. 28.

Thus, Fujimori repeated his discourse of 'us versus them' delegitimizing the criticism to the government about Human Rights linking it with the fight against the terrorism. Such argument was used once again to attack the political parties when the government announced the legislative decrees on November 16th 1991. These decrees produced the conflict between the executive and the Parliament, which at the same time has been considered the *raison d'être* of the self-coup of 1992 by many authors:

Evidence presented in this and previous chapters show that Fujimori's lack of legislative majority and the conflict that emerged and worsened between the executive and the legislature placed a central role in the decision to close Congress and suspend the Constitution (Kenney 2004, p. 259).⁶

Beyond this important hypothesis, what is crucial to highlight for our research is how Fujimori used once again his discourse to delegitimize political parties. For that reason, the parties' leaders responded criticizing the legislative decrees. The secretary of the APRA (Partido Aprista Peruano), Luís Alva Castro, affirmed: 'it tries to impose a wild capitalism' (*El Nacional*, 20 November 1991), the senator Enrique Bernales said that the decrees of pacification supposed 'an authoritarian thought of the society' (*El Comercio, La República*, 17 November 1991) and Javier Diez Canseco added: 'it has given a *white coup* with these legislative decrees' (*El Ayllu* no. 5, 21 November 1991).

⁶ In the same way, Murakami has mentioned that the conflict with the parliament decided the coup for three reasons: a) the possibility of Fujimori's overthrow; b) the initiative to limit the presidential powers with the "Law of Parliamentary Control of the Normative Acts of the President of the Republic"; c) and the derogation and modification of the legislative decrees related to the pacification (cf. 2007, p. 294).

Against the opposition, Fujimori defended his legislative decrees accusing the political parties and the Parliament of corruption and of being influenced by the drug trafficking, so he stated on December 6th, 1991:

I do not want to think badly while I do not have proofs, but it is good that the things are explained to the country and I believe that the Congress owes a clear explanation of why it wants to leave without sanction the people who make money laundering of the drug trafficking (*Expreso*, 7 December 1991).

The paradox in this argument is that according to the public poll done in Lima in December of 1991, 72% agreed with the way the President attacked the Parliament and only 21% disagreed. Furthermore, 75% affirmed that the major problem of Peru was the terrorism and 58% and 51% said that the President and the Army, respectively, were doing well their work in the fight against the subversion. On the contrary, 67% said that both the Parliament and the Judiciary were doing badly their work in this fight (*Apoyo, Informe de opinión*, December 1991). Such numbers show us how the people supported the way that Fujimori's discourse attacked the Parliament because they disapproved it and perceived that the government had been efficient, despite of its authoritarian behaviour.

This context allowed Fujimori to criticize constitutional democracy. As we have seen, he was suggesting that democracy had been weak; however, Fujimori's discourse said that his government was making a strong democracy which imposes authority and political order with the support of the people and the Army against the corruption of political parties and the Parliament, the 'useful idiots' working for the Human Right's organizations and the terrorism caused by SL and MRTA:

The terrorism knows that today they confront a government with authority... (They) don't have and nor will have the lukewarm atmosphere of a very kind democracy and the weak governments that made them grow (...) ...the order and the authority will continue being imposed (...) The terrorist bandits are wrong if they believe they would be able to return to universities to intimidate students, teachers and workers. This one is not a government of useful idiots or pusillanimous. We know that the peace of the citizens and the high interests of Peru are in game and we are not going to yield a millimeter of what has been gained (in the newspapers, 9 October 1991).

The people and the Army are the two columns in which my government lies, because they are solid institutions and are clearly conscious of their institutional role; they are also firm protectors of the moral values (in the newspapers, 10 December 1991).

To sum up, Fujimori's discourse began calling to a national consensus, but when the government implemented controversial measures like the economic 'shock', the military courts and the legislative decrees, Fujimori's discourse had to attack its detractors to legitimize himself and his measures. This strategy allowed the Army, the business leaders and the majority of the people to support Fujimori even though his measures were authoritarian, because all of them wished the government could solve the deep crisis in the country.⁷

3. Fujimori's coup d'état speech

On Sunday April 5th, 1992 at 10:30 pm, Alberto Fujimori, supported by the Army, suspended temporarily the Constitution, dissolved the Parliament, arrested his major detractors and announced an 'Emergency Government' and the 'National Reconstruction'.

Coup d'états in South America between 1968-2008		
Country	Type	Year
Peru	Military Coup	1968
Bolivia	Coup	1970-1971
Uruguay	Coup	1973
Chile	Military Coup	1973
Peru	Coup	1975
Ecuador	Military Coup	1976
Argentina	Military Coup	1976
Bolivia	Coup	1980
Peru	Coup	1992
Venezuela	Coup (failed)	1992
Ecuador	Coup	2000

* Military Coup is when the Army as an institution supports the coup.

⁷ In this sense, both the Army and the business leaders subscribed the ideas of economic liberalism and *raison d'état* in order to achieve a pragmatic solution toward the crisis in Peru (cf. Cotler 2000, p 22).

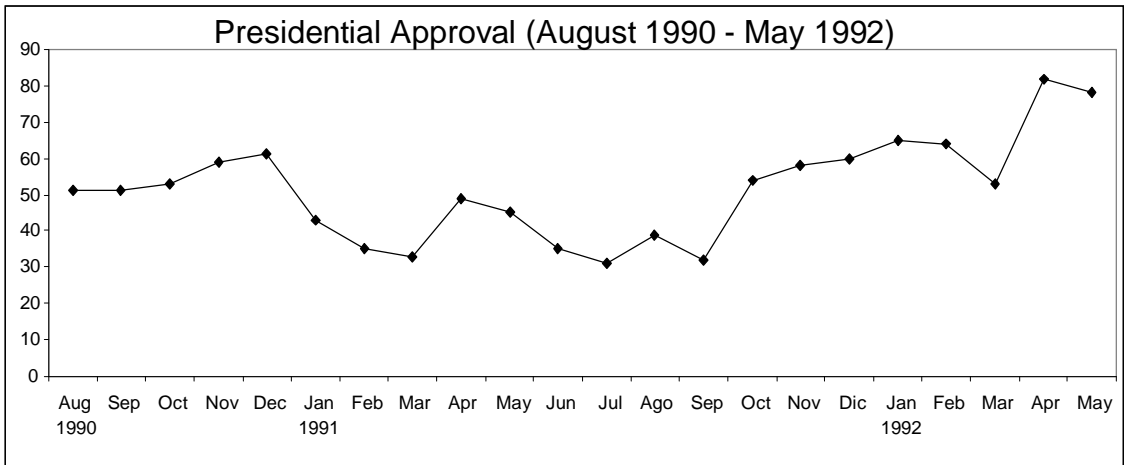
** Coup refers to a civilian coup with the support of the Army or when a part of the army overthrows the government, but not as an institution.

In this section we analyze the Fujimori's speech on April 5th through three main issues which he emphasized in his arguments: a) the necessity of an state of exception to justify the breakdown of the constitutional democracy; b) the fact that Fujimori defended a true democracy supported by the people; and c) he also undermined the authority of the Parliament and political parties, accusing them of political ineffectiveness and corruption.

3.1. Political exception:

The calling to the political exception is crucial to understand the legitimacy of coup d'états: 'A Coup d'état does not only by definition constitute an exceptional event, but must invariable be justified with reference to exceptional circumstances to be successful' (Bartelson 1997, p. 323). In this sense, Fujimori's discourse legitimized his authoritarian measures suggesting that the country was in an exceptional political context due to the terrorism, drug trafficking and corruption; for this reason, people wished an immediate solution of these problems:

The country is fed up with this situation and wants solutions. (...) Nobody doubts that Peru can't postpone indefinitely social and economical fundamental changes. That is why, today, more than ever, Peru needs not a short relieve or a partial reform, but a profound transformation. Peru can't keep deteriorating because of terrorism, drug trafficking and corruption. (*Presidential speech*, 5 April 1992, <http://www.congreso.gob.pe/museo.htm>).



Source: Murakami 2007, p. 252.

Note: The numbers of April-May 1992 are based in *Informe de Opinión* April-May 1992.

Consequently, for the Fujimori's discourse the breakdown of the constitutional democracy had been legitimate because the political situation required a decision in order to rebuild the country.⁸ Besides, it is essential to highlight that the president announced the main government's measures following the argument of political exception:

As President of the Republic, I have stated directly all these anomalies and have felt in the responsibility of assuming an *attitude of exception* to lighten the process of this national reconstruction (...) (one of the measures to achieve this is) to dissolve temporarily the Congress of the Republic, until the approval of a new organic structure of the Legislature, which will be approved by a national plebiscite (...) Peru has only one way: the national reconstruction (Ibid).

Such paragraph illustrates how the argument of Fujimori is not legal but political, because in the Constitution in the Articles 229 and 230 it was prescribed that the Senate could not be dissolved by the president.⁹

⁸ The political exception is related to the situation of necessity 'because civil war is the opposite of normal conditions, it lies in a zone of undecidability with respect to the state of exception, which is state power's response to the most extreme internal conflicts' (Agamben 2005, p. 2).

⁹ In the Constitution of 1979 the article no. 229 stated: 'The President of the Republic cannot dissolve the Chamber of Deputies during the state of siege or emergency. Neither can he dissolve it in the last year of his mandate. During this term, the Chamber can only decide the censorship of the Council of Ministers or any of the Ministers with the similar vote of at least two thirds of the legal number of deputies. The President of the Republic cannot exercise the faculty of dissolution but one time during its mandate'.

However, as we have seen, Fujimori did not refer to the decree of emergency, but to the exceptional decision to save the country.

How could a political exceptional discourse be legitimized? According to a public poll made in Lima before April 5th, 49% affirmed that the principal problem was terrorism; 39% remarked it was economic recession and unemployment; and 31% corruption. Nevertheless, the most important thing of this poll is that 44% of people did not have a clear idea of who else, apart from the president, was the right person to fight against terrorism (Apoyo, *Informe de opinión*, April 1992).

That is to say, many people had a strong plebiscitary sensation toward the political situation in April of 1992; therefore, the justification of exception in Fujimori's discourse became attractive for many people who had seen the economic improvement between 1990 and 1992.¹⁰

3.2. Real democracy:

The second argument of Fujimori's discourse was that the breakdown of constitutional democracy had been a measure to consolidate real democracy:

There was no democracy in Peru, there was only the dictatorship of a chain of corruption which stems from the Parliament and the Judiciary and what we have done is to break this chain in order to reach, precisely, democracy (...) The people back all these measures and I am sure that the world will understand that it is all about a popular uprising turned into order. (*El Comercio*, 12 April 1992).

The surprise for many of constitutional's supporters was that the majority of the people in Lima affirmed with 51% that the break of the constitutional regime was democratic, whereas 33% considered it as dictatorial. Furthermore, the public polls from Apoyo, Datum and CPI reported that the coup d'état had 71%, 84% and 87% of approval, respectively (Conaghan 2005: p. 33). Nevertheless, according to Apoyo's public poll, 71% affirmed that they would disapprove the president if he did

Furthermore, the article no. 230 stated 'The Senate cannot be dissolved' (*Congreso de la República*, http://www.congreso.gob.pe/grupo_parlamentario/aprista/const28.htm).

¹⁰ An analysis of public polls would demonstrate that it is the improvement and stabilization of the economic situation and not the counter subversive fight the fundamental variable to explain Fujimori's success among the population, as well as also the support to his following measures, as the coup d'état of 1992 (cf. Weyland 2000-2001: p. 217).

not come back to the constitutional regime in the next months (Apoyo, *Informe de opinión*, 8 April 1992).

According to Kenney these results show an apparent contradiction in the legitimacy of the coup with two different lines of reasoning: the first one supposes that the support does not show an inconsistency between the preference for democracy and the support to the coup; and the second one that the coup was an undemocratic measure of urgency to consolidate the democracy in the long term (cf. 2004: p. 231).

Beyond this explanation, what is true is that Fujimori legitimized his authoritarian measure suggesting that the real democracy is not based on the Constitution but on the people who acclaimed him and identified themselves with the coup d'état decision (cf. Schmitt 2002, p. 22). Fujimori stated this issue after the coup:

In Peru, the people is the sovereign and we have assumed this feeling with determination to dismiss the indecisive and passive attitude (...) Don't tell me: the return to democracy, because that would mean to return to a false democracy. What we are establishing is a real democracy. (*El Peruano*, 13 April 1992).

In this sense, in spite of the fact that the political parties proclaimed the vice-president Máximo San Román as the constitutional president of Peru, because Fujimori had violated the Constitution, 60% of the population - according to a public poll made in Lima on April 6th- showed their disagreement with this measure (Apoyo, *Informe de opinión*, 8 April 1992). Fujimori's democracy discourse had been legitimized

3.3. Delegitimizing the Parliament and political parties:

Finally, because of the conflict between Fujimori and the Parliament for the pacification legislative decrees, Fujimori's speech argued that the Parliament and political parties did not have interest in the reconstruction of the country because they were the ones who incited the political crisis:

The ineffectiveness of the Parliament is in addition to the corruption of the Judiciary as well as the obtuse attitude and the open conspiracy against the people's and the government's efforts elaborated by the political parties' elites. These elites- expression of the traditional way of political behaviour- have the only interest of blocking the economical measures that provide an improvement from the bankruptcy situation, in which these elites left the

country. That is the reason of the permanent rejection to an irresponsible, sterile, anti historic and anti national Parliament which emphasizes the interests of groups and partisan elites over the Peruvian interests. The country wants the Parliament to be connected with the great national issues, exempt from the vices of the political caciquism and clientelism. (*Presidential Speech*, 5 April 1992, <http://www.congreso.gob.pe/museo.htm>).

Owing to these accusations many parliamentarians declared the vacancy of the president, because they argued that Alberto Fujimori 'is morally incapacitated to exercise this high position, for having incurred in flagrant violation of the Political Constitution of Peru and for trying to subvert the public order' (in the newspapers, 7 April 1992).

However, why people supported these attacks against the Parliament? In April, before the coup, a public poll had showed that 69% of the population affirmed that the APRA had a determinant influence in the Judiciary (*Apoyo, Informe de opinión, April 1992*). Consequently, in a public poll on 6 April 80% agreed with the closing of the Parliament (*Apoyo, Informe de opinión, 8 April 1992*). In addition, a public poll done in Lima in May revealed that 59% had a bad opinion of the majority of the parliamentarians and 28% of all of them (*Apoyo, Informe de opinión, May 1992*).

In conclusion, Fujimori's discourse attacked the Parliament and the political parties suggesting that they were corrupted and did not wanted the pacification of the country, therefore, they criticized the government and the president. This way of reasoning was legitimized in the public sphere due to the fact that the people were disappointed about the parties and the Parliament as institution. In this sense, Fujimori's authoritarian measure appeared attractive once again for the people.

4. Problems and challenges of democracy in Peru

Carl Schmitt said that there are some exceptional circumstances where safety, peace and political order are more important than the support to constitutional democracy and, as a result, the head of government could overthrow the Constitution if the situation were of extremely necessity (cf. Schmitt 1998, p 17). Is this issue true? Could the president break the democracy due to the political necessity? In this sense, was the Fujimori's coup d'état legitimate? Is there any another solution to face the political crisis apart from the authoritarian measures?

Our research has showed how this issue in Carl Schmitt is present in Fujimori's discourse. He stated that Peru was in an exceptional situation because of the hyperinflation, the terrorism and the corruption, so it was needed a pragmatic decision in order to restore the country. The Army, business leaders and the people perceived this argument as plausible due to the economic stabilization; for this reason, they supported the Fujimori's attack to the political parties, Human Right's organizations and government's detractors.

Consequently, a main challenge to constitutional democracy in Peru is that it should show itself as an effective way to resolve political authority's problems, due to the fact that the people demand solutions for the economic crisis and terrorism. The problem in Peru is that there is any historical example of democratic solution in these circumstances, because coup d'états always have been a way for the head of government to resolve them: Oscar R. Benavides in 1912, Augusto B. Leguía in 1919, Manuel A. Odría in 1948, Juan Velasco Alvarado in 1968, Francisco Morales Bermudez in 1975 and Alberto Fujimori in 1992.

Therefore, this is the challenge of a country which has a long history of political instability where Fujimori's coup was only one example of this one. For this reason, the next Peruvian constitutional governments should show that they are capable to resolve problems without the necessity of authoritarian discourses. Will they be able to do it? They only know it.

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