

Understanding Fujimori's 1990 Presidential Election
How Meaning and Identity is Constructed
By Karinna Berrospi

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Capstone Advisor: Naren Kumarakulasingam

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Chapter I: Introduction

Puzzle

In 1990 Alberto Fujimori was elected president of Peru. Fujimori's electoral success was a historic event because he was the first president of Peru of non-European ancestry. Additionally, Fujimori was the first person of Asian descent in the world to become president of a country outside of Asia.

Fujimori, an unknown *Nisei* (Peruvian of Japanese descent) won the presidency over Mario Vargas Llosa, one of the most distinguished novelists in Latin America, who through his writing had brought enormous prestige to Peru.¹ From 1987, when Vargas Llosa was considered a potential presidential candidate, to until a month before the elections, Peru and the international community expected that Llosa would become Peru's next president. In the beginning of the presidential race, Fujimori was one of five minor candidates.² Fujimori positioned himself as an independent and did not seek to ally with any other political party. Five weeks before the election he had only 3% of voter preferences on the public opinion polls. Yet, in the first electoral round (Peru has a run-off law that calls for a second election if no candidate wins 50 % of the votes), he earned 30% of the votes.³ In doing so, Fujimori almost matched the leading candidate, Mario Vargas Llosa, who had spent twenty times more on media advertisement and had a campaign which included the expensive services of Sawyer Miller, a New York-based

¹ Vargas Llosa rose to fame in the 1960s with novels such as *The Time of the Hero* (*La ciudad y los perros*, 1963/1966) *The Green House* (*La casa verde*, 1965/1968), the monumental *Conversation in the Cathedral* (*Conversación en la catedral*, 1969/1975), and other widely translated novels. After receiving numerous literature prizes, Llosa was one of the finalists for the Nobel Prize in Literature.

² Schmidt, Gregory D, *Fujimori's 1990 Upset Victory in Peru: Electoral Rules, Contingencies, and Adaptive Strategies*, 321,

³ Polling date from Apoyo S.A, a well-respected polling firm in Lima

political consulting firm.⁴ Fujimori went on to become Peru's next president after the second electoral round. He received 56.5% of the votes, while Vargas Llosa received 33.9 %.⁵ Thus, despite all of the advantages Vargas Llosa had, he humiliatingly lost to Fujimori in the second round by approximately twenty points.

In addition to Fujimori's disadvantages in campaign funding and running as an independent, he was also going up against a history of racial discrimination in Peru. Politically isolated and economically marginalized, indigenous people in Peru suffered the consequences of European colonialism in the 1500s. In addition, racial discrimination in Peru extended to other non- white ethnic groups such as the blacks who were brought as slaves, and the Chinese and Japanese who immigrated to Peru to work on the sugar plantations and the railways.⁶ From this long history of discrimination until Fujimori's election, a European descended-minority ruled Peru.⁷

Taking into account Peru's history of racial discrimination, Fujimori's victory is puzzling. A son of Japanese immigrants, he managed to become Peru's first president of non-European ancestry. Doing so, Fujimori broke away from the legacy colonialism had left in Peru. The Peruvian citizenry interrupted the long-standing history of having presidents of European ancestry. How did a Japanese-Peruvian - who spoke Spanish with a noticeable accent, didn't belong to any political party and had a campaign with very limited funding - surge ahead in the polls? How did he defeat one of Peru's most famous native sons? In order to answer these questions, one must first understand what exactly was taking place in the 1990 election. Most

⁴ Guillermoprieto, Alma. *Letter from Lima*, 122. From interviews with Fujimori's advisers, Guillermoprieto reports that Fujimori's campaign spent a total of hundred and twenty thousand dollars while Mario Vargas Llosa's campaign is believed to have cost around \$ 10 million dollars.

⁵ Data found on Washington on GPO for the Library of Congress: *Peru: A Country Study*.

⁶ See Takenaka, *The Japanese in Peru*, for a more detailed history of the Japanese immigration in Peru and its relationship to the 1990 election.

⁷ Historically during colonial times, 'criollos' was the official term to refer to Europeans who were born in Peru. In contemporary Peru the European descendents are the so-called 'criollos.'

importantly, it is necessary to have a thorough background of how the established parties in the first round failed. The flaws of these parties set the stage for the political space that was opened for the contest between Mario Vargas and Fujimori.

The First Round: The Contenders Beyond Vargas Llosa and Fujimori

The 1990 election is an electoral puzzle not just because Fujimori defeated the distinguished novelist, Vargas Llosa, but because Fujimori also beat two other influential contenders in the presidential race. The other two contenders came from the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA), a social democratic party and Peru's oldest political party, and the United Left (IU), one of the largest Marxist coalitions in Latin America. These two parties (APRA and IU) along with Fujimori's party Cambio 90 (C-90) and Vargas Llosa's party, Democratic Front (FREDEMO) made up the four main contenders in the election.

Contender 1: The Discredited APRA

One of the contenders was APRA. The 1985 election of Alan García was the first time in history a member of the APRA party had won the presidency. The Peruvian economy experienced a 25% contraction in the García administration. Peru had the highest rate of inflation and only 18.6 % of the work force in Lima was fully employed.⁸ During the 1990 election, Alva Castro, the APRA presidential candidate, had the challenging task of representing a failed government [García's APRA government] after it had been hurt by the disastrous performance of García. The fact that APRA was weakened and discredited, led to the failure of Alva Castro in the presidential race.

⁸ See Peru Statistics 1993. PromPeru- Apoyo SA

Contender 2: The Divided Left

The demise of APRA provided an opportunity for one of the other major contenders, the United Left (IU). Leftist parties had traditionally won over 20 % of the vote in all national elections. In the early 1980s the coalition had a good chance of winning the presidential election.⁹ However, the scenario changed in the 1990 election. Instead of building a broad base of support, the IU divided in 1989. A reformist block within the IU created the IS and made Alfonso Barrantes Lingán, a former popular mayor of Lima, its presidential candidate. The IU responded by nominating Henry Pease, a moderate university professor and a practicing Catholic.

The difference between the IU and IS lay in their views on the informal sector.¹⁰ The IU placed a stronger emphasis on the class struggle of the proletariat and the peasantry while the IS also sought the support of the informal sector.¹¹ It was important to get the support of the informal sector because it had become a large part of the Peruvian electorate.¹² The difference in their views led to the drastic divide of the Left.

Prior to the internal crisis within the IU, in a poll conducted in 1988, Barrantes had the support of 34 % of those surveyed, while Vargas Llosa had only 24 %.¹³ Barrantes was seen as a leftist with a populist appeal, closely identified with the urban poor. He earned second place in

⁹ Taylor, L *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back: The Peruvian Izquierda Unida: 1980-1990*, 108

¹⁰ In the book "The Other Path", Hernando de Soto, a Peruvian economist defines informality as the popular response to the rigid "mercantilist" states dominant in Peru that survive by only granting the privilege of legal participation in the economy to a small elite. This means that the informal economy is the poor who live by their remarkable wits.

¹¹ The distinction of the informal sector is often unclear, but for this study I define the informal sector as an electorate made up of wage earners who are nonunionized and who work in insecure and unprotected jobs. On the other hand, I define workers as manual wage earners, as the other segment of the workforce.

¹² In 1990 election there were 10, 042, 599 people registered to vote. To get more details on the size of the electorate see *International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance* in IDEA. In regard to the increase of the people of the informal sector, only in the 25 districts of Lima they expanded from 444,000 to 730,000 between 1981 and 1986.

¹³ Ibid, 114

the 1985 presidential elections. However, his appeal decreased after he lost the 1986 mayoral race for reelection. Furthermore, Barrantes' reluctance to criticize the government of Alan García, led to his resignation from the leftist coalition. Therefore, the IU lost the electoral alliance of the IS. The rupture of the political alliance weakened the coalition. The division into two candidacies [IU and IS] left its supporters confused and frustrated. As a result, the leftist vote was drastically divided and reduced to an electoral force of only 11% of the vote in the election.¹⁴

Contender 3: The non-strategic alliance of FREDEMO

The weakness of IU and APRA opened a new political space for Mario Vargas Llosa, who was leading the Democratic Front (FREDEMO). FREDEMO was formed by an alliance of Vargas Llosa's Movimiento Libertad (ML) with two established parties, Popular Action (AP) and the Popular Christian Party (PPC). After a long-debate about what FREDEMO would stand for in the election, FREDEMO was born after an agreement among Vargas Llosa, the ML leader, former President Fernando Belaunde, the AP leader, and Luis Bedoya, the PPC leader. However, a strong union was not created because FREDEMO was at odds with the AP and the PPC. Under former President Belaunde, the AP had used the Peruvian state to build political *clienteles*.¹⁵ Under the twice-elected Mayor of Lima, Luis Bedoya, the PPC had given government favors to private business such as export rebates. However, despite the differences among the political parties, Vargas Llosa's FREDEMO was officially founded in 1988. From then on the electoral coalition went on to become the leading party in the presidential race. FREDEMO advocated neoliberal policies through a shock-doctrine, appealing to white collar

¹⁴ Taylor, L *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back: The Peruvian Izquierda Unida: 1980-1990*, 116

¹⁵ Political *clienteles* refers to the Latin American version of 'political machines.' Political machines are political parties that rely on hierarchy and rewards for political power.

employees and employers.¹⁶ Vargas Llosa also aspired to broaden its base to include the informal economy. He hoped his neoliberal policies would appeal to the small industrialists in the informal sector.

Contender 4: The makeshift Cambio 90

Finally, the fourth contender was Fujimori's improvised party, Cambio 90 (C-90). Adding to his party name the year 90 implied a “change now” dimension.¹⁷ The makeshift nature of the party was evident in the way Fujimori put together a party that did not previously exist. Fujimori recruited members of the Protestant community and emerging informal entrepreneurs, mostly indigenous Peruvians. The C-90 vice-presidential candidates were Maximo San Roman, a self-made industrialist of indigenous origin whose first language was Quechua (Peru’s indigenous language) and Carlos Garcia y Garcia, a black Baptist minister. Furthermore, the makeshift nature of C90 was exemplified by a lack platform or social structure. Fujimori did not have a national action plan; instead he only campaigned against the neoliberal shock program promised by Vargas Llosa.

C90 began while Fujimori was serving as the rector of the Agrarian National University. At first, it seemed that Fujimori was not confident he would win the election because he entered both the presidential and senatorial races simultaneously.¹⁸ However, as the campaign evolved, Fujimori’s aspirations for the presidency quickly became a reality. The makeshift party that began at the Agrarian National University surged in the polls against the three other main contenders. From the brief background on the contenders in the election, it is clear that C90 beat

¹⁶ The *Shock Doctrine* is an economic term that can include: sudden termination of price and currency controls, withdrawal of state subsidies, trade liberalization, and large-scale privatization.

¹⁷ Bowen’s *El Expendiente Fujimori*, 13

¹⁸ Under Peruvian law it is possible for a candidate to run both for presidency and senate at the same time.

two of the parties (APRA and IU) because both of them had decreased in popularity. Yet, the puzzling question that remains is how Fujimori won despite the popularity of FREDEMO?

This capstone aims to answer how Fujimori defeated one of Peru's native sons in the second electoral round. Chapter II has an extensive literature review of the election and I point out to the scholarly analysis that needs further contribution. Chapter III has my analysis of the election based on primary sources. I conduct a discourse analysis of the campaign by looking at primary sources such as pictures, slogans, and the presidential debate. Analyzing the election as the struggle of the indigenous majority against the status quo, I argue that the main reason for Fujimori's success was that he was able to identify with the common people. The racial difference between Fujimori and the people did no matter when taking into account the commonality of discriminatory experience between them.

Chapter II: Literature Review on Election

Introduction

Fujimori's unexpected electoral success became an area highly researched in Latin American academia because Fujimori's election represented the biggest electoral surprise in the political history of the country. There have been multiple explanations of Fujimori's electoral success. The scholarly literature is divided into three lines of thinking. Most scholars explain Fujimori's electoral success as a direct result of the demise of the political party system prior to the election. This line of thinking argues that the election outcome was a result of Vargas Llosa's alliance with two established political parties. In contrast to this line of thinking, the election has also been analyzed from an economic angle taking into account Peru's economic state under former President Alan García. This second line of thinking argues that Vargas Llosa's neoliberal message created fear of a *shock doctrine* amongst the non-elite Peruvians. In addition to these two lines of thinking that focus on electoral strategies there is a third explanation for the election, which goes beyond political and economic lines. It describes Fujimori's election as a result of Peru's indigenous and mestizo majority protesting against the status quo.¹⁹

The First Line of Thinking: Vargas Llosa and two Conservative Established Parties

The first line thinking argues that Vargas Llosa lost because he allied with PPC and AP, two established political parties. This argument comes from the think tank, Institute of Liberty and Democracy (ILD), which predicted that by forming an alliance with the Popular Christian

¹⁹ According to CIA World Factbook, Peruvian population is made up of 45% indigenous, 37% mestizos, 15% European, and 3% other

(PPC) and Popular Action (AP) parties, Vargas Llosa would lose support of the electorate.²⁰

After the election, scholars confirmed the ILD's fear that FREDEMO lost the election because Vargas Llosa was related to the traditional political parties.²¹ This argument based on the dynamics of coalition politics, focuses on the failure of FREDEMO to present itself as distinct from the traditional conservative parties.

Scholars in this line of reasoning study the collapse of the party system in the decade of the 1980s to explain the electoral success of Fujimori, as an independent candidate, in contrast to Vargas Llosa's who allied with traditional candidates. The 1980s political party system emerged from the 1978 constitutional assembly and the 1980 election, when Peru transitioned to a civil government after a decade of military rule. Through most of the 1980s, four major parties or electoral alliances competed for power. Peru possessed a relatively coherent but weakly institutionalized, four-party system.²² The party system consisted of: 1) the United Left (UL), an alliance of six officially registered political parties and various nonregistered movements; 2) The American Popular *Revolutionary* Alliance (APRA), a center left social democratic party and Peru's oldest and best organized party; 3) Popular Action (AP), a center right *clientelistic* party organized around the personality of Fernando Belaunde (president in 1963-1968 and 1980-1985); and; 4) the Popular Christian (PPC), a conservative party oriented to the interests of business and the urban middle class. In the 1985 presidential election, the four parties

²⁰ See Cameron, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in Peru*, 111, for evidence on the ILD's claim. Data of Cameron's book was used by ILD researchers to make this prediction.

²¹ See Grompone, *Fujimori: Razones y Desconciertos; El fenomeno Fujimori y la crisis de los partidos*; Dietz, Henry, *Urban Poverty, Political Participation, and the State: Lima 1970 – 1990*, Cameron's *Political Parties and the Worker-Employer Cleavage: The Impact of the Informal Sector on Voting in Lima, Peru*, Cameron, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in Peru*; Levitsky, *Fujimori's Post Party Politics*; Durand, Francisco, *El fenomeno Fujimori y la crisis de los partidos*; Kenneth, Roberts, *Neoliberalism and the Transformation of Populism in Latin America: The Peruvian Case*; and Rospigliosi, and *Las Elecciones Peruanas de 1990*.

²² An institutionalized political party system means organizations with deep-seated ideologies and coherent rules.

collectively accounted for 90% of the votes.²³ However, by the late 1980s Peru's party system had fallen into crisis in the wake of the failure of the center-right AP government of Belaunde (1980-85) and the center-left APRA government of García (1985-90). The poor performance of these two parties discredited Peru's party system.²⁴

In addition to the mistakes made by the parties [AP and APRA], another important factor for the collapse of the Peruvian party system was the expansion of the informal sector. By 1986, the informal sector made up for nearly half of the workforce in Lima. Thousands of workers in the industrial workforce were thrown out of their jobs as industry contracted.²⁵ Prior to the expansion of this sector, the Left (appealing to workers and people in the informal sector) and the Right (appealing to white-collar employees, and employers) were organized around class lines, which meant that class was a very important predictor of voting. The low-income people voted for the Left while the high-income people voted for the Right.²⁶ However, the increase of the informal sector, "weakened class-based organizations, eroded collective and partisan identities, and produced many politically unattached voters."²⁷ With the increased influence of the informal sector, class-based parties [particularly the parties on the left] were weakened. The low-income people did not all necessarily vote for the Left. The situation was not like in the 1980s when the Left tended to take the votes of the poor for granted. By the late 1980s the left had become unrepresentative of the informal sector because the party was largely based on ties with trade unions. However, with the rise of the informal sector, neighborhood based social movements became more common than organized labor. Thus, the informal economy weakened

²³ See Tanaka, *Los Espejismos de la democracia, el colapso del sistema de los partidos politicos en el Peru*, 55

²⁴ Cameron, 39

²⁵ Cameron, 43, shows that the people in the informal sector expanded from 444,000 to 730,000 between 1981 and 1986.

²⁶ Class in this line of thinking is defined based on income.

²⁷ See Lynch, *Una tragedia sin heroes. La derrota de los partidos y el origen de los independientes*, 160 For a detail history of how the informal sector in Peru skyrocketed see Hernando de Soto's *The Other Path*.

class-based parties, particularly the parties on the Left. In sum, the party system was a victim of the expansion in the informal sector during the 1980s.²⁸

The deterioration of the party-system haunted the election as it made voters move away from the traditional political parties. The economic failures of governments in the 1980s (Belaunde's center-right AP and García's center-left APRA) pushed poor voters to reject incumbents whom they had previously supported, which in turn left a vacancy in the center. Furthermore, the growth of the informal sector strengthened the need for a candidate in the center. By then the Peruvian citizenry had the choice to vote either for a candidate on the Right (Vargas Llosa) or on the Left (Barrantes). However, the parties (Left and Right) were not able to take over the center. Not even the United Left, a party, which had previously mobilized significant popular masses, was able to create support among the Peruvian citizenry. Despite a major land reform in the 1970s, the 'oligarchic' survived. Peru continued to have a form of government in which power rested with a small powerful elite tied to financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund. As a result, "many Peruvians came to view the entire party system as an 'oligarchic' political class."²⁹ Therefore, the vacant centrist option left a large sector of the voters available.³⁰ This is why Fujimori surged ahead, "he was not just an independent; he was an anti-politician."³¹ Thus, voters supported Fujimori because he stood against all of the established political parties.

²⁸ See Cameron, 23- 33, for a detailed description of the different views of the informal economy by different factions within the Right and Left. He shows how neither the Left nor Right was able to appeal to informal sector voters.

²⁹ See Levitsky, *Fujimori Post-Party Politics*, 81

³⁰ See, Grompone, *Fujimori Razones y Desconciertos*, 31 and Durand *El fenómeno Fujimori y las Crisis de los Partidos*, 111. Both scholars explain that the 1990 election, in contrast to the two previous elections in 1980 and 1985, occurred in a 'polarization atmosphere'. 'The term polarization refers to the political parties (in particular AP and APRA) which failed to cope with Peru's problems in the 1980s.

³¹ See Rospigliosi, *Las Elecciones Peruanos de 1990*, 348

The loss of viability of all established parties in the political spectrum (Left, Center-Left, Right, Center-Right), created an “entry opportunity” for an anti-system candidate like Fujimori. Fujimori emerged as the voice of discontented Peruvians over their political system and rejected alliances with established political parties that would have made him rule by coalition. Peru turned to Fujimori, as an alternative to candidates from the parties on the opposed poles of the ideological spectrum (the Right and Left). Neither the candidates on the Right and Left nor the candidates from traditional parties were able to occupy the center. Unlike these parties, Fujimori transcended the limits of class politics and looked to build a broader coalition.³² The emergence of Fujimori confirms the claim that “when a party fails to reflect the preferences of the voters, the rise of an anti-system candidate is expected.”³³ Thus, in the case of the 1990 election, the demise of the traditional established parties set the stage for Fujimori’s success.

Fujimori, the anti-system candidate was able to cultivate an image of a leader uninvolved in partisan politics; he was perceived as an independent candidate.³⁴ Fujimori relentlessly indicted political parties, in order to “de-institutionalize the norms of political co-existence and personalize the expectations of the masses onto himself.”³⁵ Fujimori sent the message that Peruvian politicians were incapable of governing. At first Vargas Llosa ran his candidacy similarly, emphasizing his independence. But as the campaign wore on, attention began to focus on his alliance with established conservative political parties that supported him. As a result, he then began to be seen more as a politician than a reformer.

³³ Ibid, 129

³⁴ See Dietz’s survey data on the 1990 election in “Urban, Poverty, Political Participation, and the State,” 219. Dietz surveys show that the primary reason why people who switched their votes [in contrast to their votes in 1985] in favor of Fujimori was because he was an independent candidate.

³⁵ Cameron, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in Peru*, 231

Unlike Mario Vargas Llosa, Fujimori was able to send the message that he represented Peru's need to be freed from unqualified politicians. Fujimori's lack of ties to any established party played in his favor. Furthermore, Fujimori's party was composed of leaders without previous political experience. Fujimori claimed to represent the interests of common people against traditional politicians. His campaign slogan, "honesty, technology, and work," contrasted with the "demagoguery of traditional politicians and evoked images of probity, efficiency, and technocratic modernization, rather than ideological motivation."³⁶ Thus, in this line of thinking, Fujimori was the beneficiary of the rejection of all institutionalised parties and of Vargas Llosa's identification with the old- money political establishments.

With respect to this line of thinking, scholars have given two clear reasons for the demise of the political party system (the mistakes of established parties and the growth of the informal economy), which in turn was manifested in the 1990 election with the appearance of Fujimori, a candidate outside the party system. This argument is not sufficient to explain the success of Fujimori because it only explains why people rejected Vargas Llosa. It is also necessary to explain what was happening in the 1980s that also affected the 1990 election. Just focusing on the political party system in the 1980s is not enough to explain Peru in the 1990s. Unlike the first line of thinking, a second line of thinking explains the importance of the candidates' campaigns

The Second Line of Thinking: The Fear of Vargas Llosa's Neoliberal Campaign

The second line of thinking analyzes the role of Vargas Llosa's campaign in the election. This line of reasoning attributes Vargas Llosa's electoral failure to the neoliberal ideas that his campaign promoted.³⁷

³⁶ See Roberts, *Neoliberalism and the Transformation of Populism in Latin America: The Peruvian Case*, 94

³⁷ In contrast to the first line of thinking this line is a more popular line of research. Scholars have not made this argument, but numerous newspaper articles at the time argued in favor of this analysis. To see examples of newspaper articles under this line of thinking read Jorge G. Castañeda, "The Fall of a Star," "Manuel D' Ornellas: 'Saltos al

In this line of research, there is popular agreement that there was a fear, amongst the non-Peruvian-elite, of Vargas Llosa's neoliberal message, particularly of the so-called shock policies that he acknowledged as necessary for Peru's transition to a market-oriented economy. Vargas Llosa repeatedly called Margaret Thatcher, "Peru's cultural heroine," and wanted to convert Peru into the "Switzerland of Latin America."³⁸ At a forum for presidential candidates sponsored by the Annual Conference of Executives (CADE), Vargas Llosa laid out his proposed shock doctrine reform in an extreme neoliberal way. He said, "Although someone might come knocking to tell me that he is going bankrupt, I would not change the program because it forms part of a [comprehensive] system."³⁹ In this way, Vargas Llosa emphasized the high costs of his shock measures. The speech at CADE made Vargas Llosa look very radical. People began to fear the social cost of his economic programs because he did not offer any tangible and/or immediate compensation for those who would be adversely affected by the shock policies.

In addition to Vargas Llosa's lack of support from ordinary Peruvians, President García, who depicted his neoliberal campaign as a sinister threat to the Peruvian citizenry, deliberately attacked him. Hugo Otero, a key political advisor to President García, stated "the president sought to polarize the electorate between those who believed in the nationalist agenda and those who believed in the neo-liberal agenda."⁴⁰ García had a personal rivalry with Vargas Llosa because the latter had publicly condemned García's nationalization plans for the banks, and formed FREDEMO as a response to García's anti-neoliberal policies. Thus, due to García's efforts to criticize Vargas Llosa, his message created fear and failed to resonate with the poor.

vacio," *Resumen Semanal*, April 6-11, 1990, p. 4; "Painless in Peru," *The Journal of Commerce*, Apr. 11, 1990, p. 8a; and Eugene Robinson, "Writer Faces Stiff Fight in Peru Runoff," *The Washington Post*, Apr. 10, 1990, p. A20.

³⁸ Bowen's *El Expendiente Fujimori*, 29

³⁹ Daschner, *The War of End of Democracy: Mario Vargas Llosa vs. Alberto Fujimori*, 167

⁴⁰ Cited in Schmidt's, *Fujimori's 1990 Upset Victory in Peru: Electoral Rules, Contingencies, and Adaptive Strategies*, 18. The quote comes from an interview with Otero, Alan García's political advisor.

This line of analysis puts the failure of Vargas Llosa's campaign in the context of Peru's economic crisis and political violence during the time. It takes into account what happened in the 1980s in Peru, but pays closer attention to the economic crisis and the rise of the Shining Path terrorist guerilla group, rather than emphasizing on the demise of the political party system. Thus, this line of thinking argues the electoral results were linked to Vargas Llosa's neoliberal message and to Fujimori's campaign that promised not to implement the shock doctrine.

This line of thinking emphasized the economic state of Peru in order to understand the election. By 1990 annual inflation reached a record 7,649 %, currency devaluation was at 4,597 %, and 75 % of the work-force was unemployed or underemployed.⁴¹ Therefore, it is argued that the different policies Vargas Llosa and Fujimori advocated in response to the economic state of the country] tremendously impacted the election.⁴²

In addition to considering the disastrous economic state of Peru, this line also mentions Peru's security situation, aggravated by the Shining Path, a terrorist group based on a Maoist, Marxist-Leninist ideology, which had created internal conflict for over ten years, carrying out a 'popular war' against the State. In the same way, another radical organization called the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) started its terrorist activities in 1984 with sabotages and executions in the country. The group also aimed to destroy and change the bureaucratic government. Indigenous and rural peasant communities found themselves caught between the activities of the government and these guerilla terrorist groups. Nevertheless, in an atmosphere of insecurity, Vargas Llosa's new economic plan failed to cultivate support from the people.

The Peruvian population faced uncertainty and fear. The policies of the Belaunde (1980-1985) and of the García (1985-1990) administrations failed to control Peru's economic crisis and

⁴¹ Peru Statistics 1993. PromPeru- Apoyo SA

⁴² See Dietz, *Urban Poverty, Political Participation and the State: Lima 1970-1990*, 216. Through a completion of surveys shows that the economy, most of all, inflation, was what matter the most from the point of view of the poor.

improve the living conditions of its people.⁴³ As a result, Vargas Llosa's proposed neoliberal policy created a new environment of fear. Neither of the two previous governments had been able to fix major national economic problems and combat the Shining Path insurgency. The economic and political failings of these two administrations explain Fujimori's electoral victory.⁴⁴

The argument in this line of reasoning confirms that Vargas Llosa lost support because voters were alienated by his drastic anti-inflation program, while Fujimori capitalized on Vargas Llosa's lack of appeal to the poor by promising not to implement the shock doctrine to end inflation. In addition Vargas Llosa advocated a platform of stringent counterterrorism against the Shining Path, while Fujimori addressed terrorism in the lines of "hunger and injustice" and by giving support to the military to fight the rebels "in strict compliance of human rights." Thus, by taking a stance against Vargas Llosa's policies on the economy and terrorism, Fujimori was able to build support amongst the electorate.

This line of thinking, unlike the first line of thinking, studies the campaign. However, arguments in this analysis do not explain why did Vargas Llosa's neoliberal model failed, since it was so diametrically opposed to the previous administrations economic plans that had left Peru in economic turmoil. From studying the economic state of Peru during the campaign one can say that it is not sufficient to examine Vargas Llosa's neoliberal message and Fujimori's opposition to the plan. It is not clear that Vargas Llosa's campaign did not appeal to the people given their experiences with previous administrations. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze what exactly about Fujimori's campaign paved the way to his success. The third line of thinking addresses this

⁴³ Degregori and Grompone show public opinion poll DATUM that shows the dramatic decline of support for Belaunde and Garcia, 139- 140.

⁴⁴ See Lewis's *Peru Time of Fear*, for necessary background information concerning the economic and political failings linked to previous administrations. If this is the first time you are citing this work, you need to provide, year, press, and place of publication.

going beyond electoral strategies and taking into account the role race played in favor of Fujimori in the election.

The Third Line of Thinking: Class and Ethnic Cleavage

The third line of thinking does not contradict the first and/or second lines of thinking, but brings a new element into the puzzle.⁴⁵ The important role class and race played in Fujimori's campaign is closely examined. This line argues that the election was a struggle between the middle/ upper class white population and the lower class, indigenous population. This racial and class cleavage is described as "the persistence of a traditional colonial nucleus."⁴⁶ The European minority upper elite, whose views of the indigenous people were largely inherited from the Spanish colonial mindset, has traditionally controlled the formal politics of Peru. The majority of Fujimori's supporters were the indigenous, people who were the majority of the poor and represented the excluded sectors of society. The indigenous were the "the unemployed youths, peasants from the poorest provinces, migrants to popular neighbors in Lima, street vendors and informal sector workers, workers in cottage industries and other impoverished middle sectors."⁴⁷

This line of thinking argues that Fujimori's popularity with the poor had a clear class and ethnic connotation. Fujimori took advantage of the cultural cleavage between Peruvians of European descent and those of indigenous descent and created a "sphere of identification" with the indigenous majority.⁴⁸ The difference in the candidates' economic resources aided Fujimori, because "it confirmed to Peruvians that Vargas Llosa was the candidate of the rich people."⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Guillemprieto's *Letter from Lima*, See Panfichi's, *The Authoritarian Alternative: 'Anti- Politics' in the Popular Sectors of Lima*, Sakuda's *El Futuro era el Peru*, Degregori's *El Aprendiz del Brujo y el Curandero Chino*, Kenneth's *Neoliberalism and the Transformation of Populism in Latin America: The Peruvian Case*, Grompone's *Fujimori Razones y Desconciertos*

⁴⁶ See Grompone *El Aprendiz del Brujo y el Curandero Chino*, 95

⁴⁷ Ibid, 39

⁴⁸ See Ibid, 39, for evidence on the more pronounced use of this cultural cleavage during the second electoral round.

⁴⁹ Rospigliosi, *Las elecciones Peruanas de 1990*, 357

Furthermore, the fact the two vice-presidents on Fujimori's ticket were of indigenous and African ancestry only heightened his image of being one of the common peoples.

Fujimori's personal experiences were very similar to those of indigenous Peruvians. The identification between the indigenous and Fujimori is reflected 1) in the migratory experience; 2) racial discrimination experience; and 3) proficiency in the Spanish Language.

Fujimori's migratory experience was similar to the indigenous from rural Peru, who migrated to Peru's urban capital, Lima. ⁵⁰Fujimori's parents arrived to Peru in the early 1930s, as part of a wave of immigration from Japan that began in the late 19th century. Fujimori's father worked as a tailor and tire repairman in Lima. Fujimori, as many of the children of immigrants, focused on school as means of personal progress. He graduated with honors from the Agrarian National University, which is not where the Peruvian elite studies. Similarly, indigenous people from rural Peru, migrated to the modern city of Lima to work low- income jobs with the hope to one day improve their standard of living. Migration was the most important experience for the majority of Peruvian adults.” ⁵¹

Another shared experience Fujimori had with the indigenous was that of ethnic discrimination and racism. Peru's history of racism was not limited to the indigenous; it extended to the Japanese who underwent a severe period of institutionalized discrimination. ⁵²

As a consequence of the world economic crisis in the 1930s, President Sanchez Cerro passed a law, which ruled that foreign businesses must hire locals as 80% of the personnel, banning Japanese immigrants. Years later, a decree was passed to set quotas for Japanese immigrants. In the early months of the 1940s, a rumor spread when the World War was an imminent and that the Japanese wanted to take over Peru and war arsenals were being hidden in

⁵⁰ Panfichi, *The Authoritarian Alternative: 'Anti- Politics' in the Popular Sectors of Lima*, 229

⁵¹ Grompone, 111

⁵² See Panfichi, 229

zones with high concentration of Japanese immigrants. This rumor led to a huge riot, which ended in the looting of Japanese businesses. In 1941 a day after the Pearl Harbor attacks, the Peruvian government froze Japanese bank accounts, confiscated the property of Japanese immigrants, and shutdown Japanese schools. This situation was furthermore aggravated when Peru, as an ally of the United States, allowed the Japanese people to be deported to the US and sent to internment camps.

The institutionalized racism suffered by the Japanese community was similar to the second-class citizen treatment the indigenous people received throughout Peru's history since the arrival of the Europeans.⁵³ Fujimori and the indigenous migrants from rural Peru experienced being outsiders in their own country. As someone who had experienced discrimination, Fujimori presented himself as a victim of Vargas Llosa's attacks, thereby identifying himself with the Peruvian poor. He also responded to racial attacks by referring to the derogatory names, as "a *chinito* and a group of *cholitos*."⁵⁴

Another shared experience between Fujimori and the indigenous was his identification based on an "informal character." This type of character refers to the fact that neither Fujimori nor the indigenous speak proper Spanish.⁵⁵ Many of the indigenous people speak Quechua⁵⁶ and those who spoke Spanish do so in a very different way from the middle and upper class population in Lima. The fact that Fujimori's mother was a Japanese immigrant who did not speak Spanish heightened his identification with the people. While Vargas Llosa appealed to the

⁵³ See Caneda's *The Racial Politics of Culture and Silent Racism in Peru*, for the history of racial discrimination against the indigenous in Peru.

⁵⁴ See, Salcedo, *Tsunami Fujimori*, 78. In Salcedo's article *Chinito* is defined as an affectionate, diminutive term for people of Asian origin; and 'cholito' as a diminutive for 'mestizo', a term for people of Andean ethnicity

⁵⁵ See Sakuda, *El Futuro era el Peru*, 375

⁵⁶ Quechua is well known as the language of the ancient Incas. There are between 3.5 to 4.4 million speakers of Quechua in Peru (See Gordon's *Quechua Language*) and about seven million across the Andean region (See Lewis' *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*)

Spanish-speaking eloquent minority and mocked Fujimori's mother, he was mocking the mothers of many Peruvians who did not speak Spanish fluently either. FREDEMO practically ignored the fact that the Spanish language has been just massively diffused in Peru in past forty years.⁵⁷ Therefore, FREDEMO failed to identify with the majority of the Peruvian citizenry.

In sum, all of these three common experiences created a linkage between Fujimori and the indigenous. Thus, "Fujimori's racial features, migratory experience, and modest origins were reminiscent of the profound cultural cleavage between Peruvians of European descent and those of Indigenous descent."⁵⁸ Based on all of these common experiences, Fujimori repeatedly claimed he would be *Un Presidente como Tu* (A President like you), and with this statement he claimed to represent all of Peru, not just its European, urban, educated minority.⁵⁹ Within this search for identification, "recognition of closeness is developed, the "us" of the leader and the masses – which is based on recognition of similar life experiences."⁶⁰

My Contribution to the Scholarly Analysis

The arguments in the three lines of thinking have merit. Most scholars confirm that the demise of the party system, and Vargas Llosa's alliance with two established parties, cost Vargas Llosa the election. Some analysts go into further detail and prove that Vargas Llosa's neoliberal campaign compromised his candidacy. Through the literature review it has been demonstrated that the first and second lines of thinking show mounting evidence that their claims should not be ignored. However, these lines of analysis are not complete. The first line of thinking fails to mention the extraordinary election that took place in 1990, where racial issues were as

⁵⁷ Grompone, 111

⁵⁸ See Roberts, *Neoliberalism and the Transformation of Populism in Latin America: The Peruvian Case*, 95

⁵⁹ See Guillermprieto, *Letter from Lima*, 121

⁶⁰ See Valentin's *Tsunami Fujimori's* for this argument. However because source is an unpublished manuscript, see Panfichi's *The Authoritarian Alternative 'Anti-Politics' in the Popular Sectors of Lima*, 227 for a citation of Valentin's quote.

significant as Vargas Llosa's alliance with two established parties. The second line of thinking does analyze the campaign, but it does not analyze Fujimori's campaign beyond his stance on the economy and terrorism. It does not answer the racial puzzle of the election, that is, how a Japanese-Peruvian became Peru's first president of non-European ancestry. The third line of thinking, however, does analyze the election from this angle by claiming that Peru's record of racism and classism generated a push to elect Fujimori, because he was not white, therefore, one of them. However, there has not been a thorough analysis of this racial synthesis. My capstone will add to this line of analysis with a detailed explanation of how Fujimori showed that he was not only different from the elites, but also closely related to the indigenous and mestizo majority. I will analyze the election by asking if race and class played an important role in Fujimori's election to see to what extent the argument in the third line of thinking can be demonstrated. De Soto once said, "But people don't vote according to what they're told they vote according to how they feel. People identified with Fujimori."⁶¹ I will analyze how Fujimori wielded class and race to his benefit arguing that the basic reason for his election was Fujimori's ability to relate to the common people.

⁶¹ Guillermprieto's, *Letter from Lima*, 122

Chapter III: Analysis

Introduction

Before turning to a thorough qualitative analysis of Fujimori's ability to relate to the common people, it is essential to study the quantitative results of the election in the first and second electoral round in order to operationalize the "common people." It is necessary to focus on the groups of constituents that made Fujimori's election possible. The quantitative analysis refers to the "common people" as those in the poorer segments of society. Doing so, the analysis traces voting pattern behavior and provides evidence that the poorer segments of society voted for Fujimori.

Although class based parties had suffered a major setback in the 1980s, the quantitative analysis shows that the class cleavage remained a defining feature in the election. This does not exactly contradict the argument in the first line of thinking that contributed the informal economy to the transformation of the party system. However, my data shows how the informal economy did not emerge as a distinct electoral bloc with interests clearly differentiated from the Left. In other words, the class cleavage did not disappear, but it only debilitated. The class cleavage pattern in the election shows how Peru is still a country divided along class lines.

The class cleavage is very important in the case of Peru because the poor are the majority of the population.⁶² This means that in a majority run-off electoral system, like the Peruvian one, the majority of the people have the electoral power. In the case of Peru, the poor determined the

⁶² The poor are defined by the standards of Peru's Central Reserve Bank and by how the National Jury of Elections categorizes rich and poor departments based on geographical location.

outcome because social classes seem to be the major determinant of like thinking to support a candidate.⁶³

Analyzing voting behavior just based on class cleavage is not complete. It assumes that class is the fundamental line of social cleavage and it ignores the role race plays. A qualitative study will provide source that speak to how class is interrelated to race; the upper- income class tends to be predominately composed of criollos, while the lower-income class tends to be composed of indigenous and mestizo Peruvians.⁶⁴ In the national census of 1981 data confirms the poverty status of Peru's native populations at the bottom of the socioeconomic-scale. Anthropologist Carlos E. Aramburu who analyzed the data ranking 153 provinces based on indicators reached this conclusion.⁶⁵

Based on Peru's division along race and class, I will be able to focus on how Fujimori specifically wanted to identify with the majority of the indigenous and mestizo populations of Peru. The qualitative analysis conceptualized race from a discourse analytical perspective. Doing so, it seeks to explain how meaning and identity of the marginalized peoples of Peru is constructed, and how issues of class and race cannot be ignored in the analysis of the election.

⁶³ Social class refers to the lower class, the middle class or the upper class based on income. The cutoff points also are based from Peru's Central Reserve Bank.

⁶⁴ Indigenous are the descendants of a large number of distinct ethnic groups who inhabited the country prior to its discovery by Europeans around 15000. Along with the indigenous, the *mestizos* form part of the dominated majority of Peru's populations. ⁶⁴ I refer to mestizos as those of mixed European and Andean ancestry. Finally, I define the European dominant minority as *criollos*. Back in colonial times they were the descendants of the Spanish Conquistadores. Today the term is used for those of any European descent. For a detail explanation of these terms see Van den Bergue, *The Use of Ethnic Terms in the Peruvian Social Science Literature*, 12-23, Mueller, *National Sounds: Sharing Culture and Constructing Identity in Peru*, 1-31

⁶⁵ For further information on the study of anthropologist Aramburu see, Hudson, Rex. A., *A Country Study, Chapter: Urban Classes*. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992.

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative study is divided into two parts. First, graphs will be shown by an analysis divided per administrative departments (departments are analogous to the states within the national unit). Second, graphs will be shown on the voting pattern in the different districts in Lima. A greater focus will be given to Lima because it holds one-third of Peru's population.

Part 1: Analysis divided per administrative departments

Table 1: Departments broken down in Level of Poverty - *Source: Peru's Central Bank.*



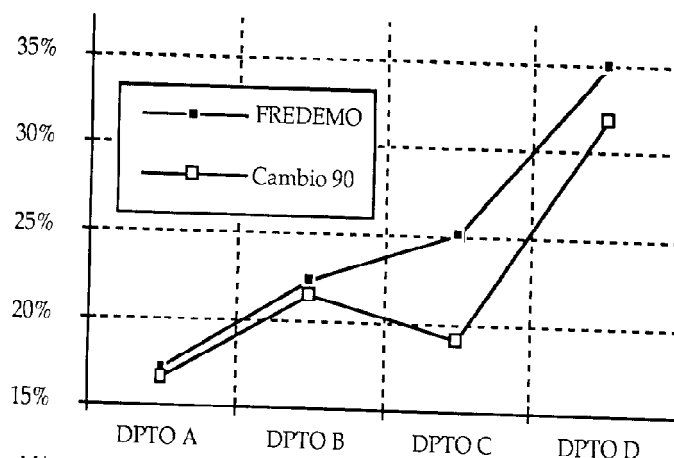
A	B	C	D
Poorest	Poor	Rich	Richest
Apurímac	Puno	Tumbes	Callao
Huancavelica	San Martín	Lambayeque	Lima
Ayacucho	Piura	La Libertad	
Cajamarca	Ancash	Moquegua	
Huánuco	Ucayali	Ica	
Cusco	Loreto	Arequipa	
Amazonas	Madre de Dios	Tacna	
	Junín		
	Pasco		

Before turning to the outcome of the election, I will divide the departments in Peru into four groups. I will use the division done by the Central Bank; there are four different groups of departments ranging from the poorest (Group A) to the richest (Group D). The Central Bank designed a “map of poverty” based on the 1979 National Population and Housing Census and the statistics of the National Institute of Planning and Health. The scale to break down the departments was designed by using ten indicators of basic needs.

The graphs in the next pages will compare electoral support across these four groups of departments. The X-axis represents the breakdown of the departments into the four categories mentioned. The Y-axis represents the percentage of the total votes for each FREDEMO and Cambio 90. The graphs will analyze if the poor segments of society in fact supported Fujimori. For this study it would have been ideal not to only breakdown the data per departments, but also per provinces (territorial units within departments). For example, the departments of Arequipa and La Libertad have the richest and poorest provinces in the country. The heterogeneity of the provinces within each department restricts this analysis. However, the available information from the Central Bank is important for this study.

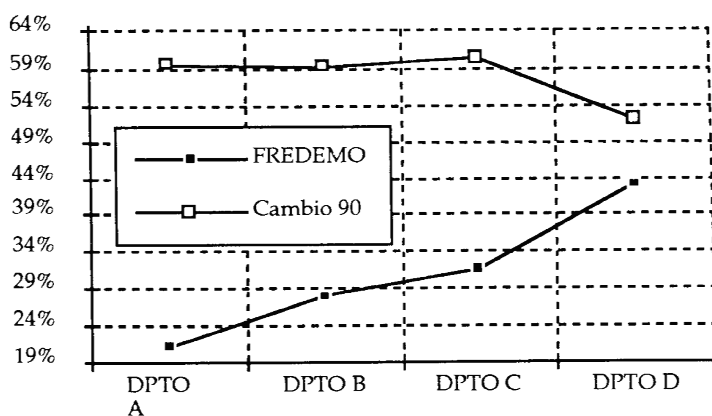
Comparing Group A, B, C, D – Source: National Jury of Elections

Graph 1: First Electoral Round in the Country



This graph takes us back to the puzzling question: how did Fujimori go from 3 % of voter preferences on public opinion polls to earning approximately 30% in the first electoral round, almost matching Vargas Llosa? Which departments provided the most support to Fujimori? Is it true that Fujimori targeted his efforts on the poor departments of Peru? This graph refutes the claim that the poor voted for Fujimori while the rich voted for FREDEMO. If one looks specifically at the electoral percentages of Fujimori, they do not increase proportionally to the level of poverty in the departments. Fujimori, as well as Vargas Llosa, concentrated his attention on the departments with the highest level of wealth (Lima, the capital, and Callao, a constitutional province located in the West of Lima).⁶⁶

Graph 2: Second Electoral Round in the Country



In the second electoral round Graph 1's pattern continued to be the same for Vargas Llosa but it changed for Fujimori. While Vargas Llosa obtained double the amount of votes in

⁶⁶ But second table shows that the poor did vote for Fujimori in Lima even in the first electoral round.

the richest departments (Group D= approximately 44%) than the poorest departments (Group A = approximately 21%), Cambio 90 earned support this time around in the less wealthier departments (A, B, C). Fujimori's support in department D decreased. Thus, the relationship between poverty and voting pattern is a little more pronounced. This leads us to the question: what made the pattern change in the second electoral round? In the second electoral round, the President of Peru (from APRA party) stood against Vargas Llosa and many of the APRA members followed Fujimori. These members predominantly came from the lower income class. Thus, Graph 2 because it shows that Fujimori did get support from the least wealthy places in the country in the second electoral round.

Part 2: Analysis divided per districts in Lima

Table 2: Districts Broken down in levels of poverty

	First round						Second round	
	IS	IU	C-90	PA	FREDEMO	Other	C-90	FREDEMO
<i>Upper-class districts</i>								
La Molina	3.5	4.8	18.2	8.7	63.4	1.4	32.1	67.9
Magdalena	3.5	3.8	21.5	12.3	58.2	0.7	34.8	65.2
Miraflores	2.7	3.2	13.8	8.8	70.9	0.6	24.0	76.0
San Isidro	2.1	2.6	9.9	7.1	77.7	0.6	17.8	82.2
San Borja	2.4	3.6	13.6	8.5	71.3	0.6	24.5	75.5
<i>Middle-class districts</i>								
Barranco	3.3	4.2	25.9	12.9	52.9	0.8	38.8	61.2
Breña	3.9	5.5	28.3	17.3	44.3	0.7	47.1	52.9
Jesus María	3.4	5.1	18.3	12.3	60.3	0.6	33.1	66.9
La Victoria	4.0	5.4	35.8	14.3	39.2	1.3	52.6	47.4
Lince	3.2	4.3	20.7	13.2	57.9	0.7	35.3	64.7
Pueblo Libre	3.4	4.5	18.1	12.3	61.2	0.5	31.8	68.2
Rimac	4.5	5.7	35.4	15.1	38.3	1.0	53.5	46.5
San Luis	3.7	6.1	36.4	11.8	40.6	1.4	51.4	48.6
San Miguel	3.3	4.1	24.1	13.1	54.9	0.5	37.6	62.4
Surco	3.2	3.6	21.6	9.9	60.6	1.1	33.7	66.3
Surquillo	4.4	4.9	32.0	14.9	42.9	0.9	48.5	51.5
<i>Lower-class districts</i>								
Ate	4.4	7.8	44.2	11.5	30.3	1.8	63.3	36.7
Carabayllo	6.8	8.9	39.1	18.7	23.5	3.0	70.5	29.5
Comas	7.7	8.5	43.6	17.3	21.1	1.8	72.0	28.0
Chorrillos	4.3	4.6	39.0	12.4	37.7	2.0	52.8	47.2
El Agustino	5.9	8.1	49.7	12.1	22.0	2.2	70.2	29.8
Independencia	10.1	8.3	46.3	14.7	19.1	1.5	73.3	26.7
Los Olivos	5.1	6.6	35.4	14.7	37.4	0.8	55.4	44.6
Lurigancho	2.6	6.3	49.0	11.5	29.4	1.2	63.7	36.3
San Juan L.	5.4	8.6	46.0	13.4	24.8	1.8	67.3	32.7
San Juan M.	6.3	6.0	42.2	14.9	28.8	1.8	62.5	37.5
San Martín	5.8	6.7	40.9	15.5	30.1	1.0	62.0	38.0
Villa María	7.1	7.1	45.8	15.4	22.6	2.0	68.6	31.4
Villa Salvador	6.2	9.5	47.2	17.5	16.9	2.7	75.1	24.9

Abbreviations: Izquierda Socialista (IS); Izquierda Unida (IU); Cambio 90 (C-90); Partido Aprista Peruano (PAP); Frente Democrático (FREDEMO)

Source: Jurado Nacional de Elecciones 1990.

In this section I will divide the districts in Lima according to their respective social classes, similarly to the way I did in previous section with the different departments in Peru. In this section, however, I will use data from the National Jury of Elections, and the districts will be divided into three groups: Upper class, middle class, and lower class.

It is important to keep in mind that Lima was one of the departments in which Fujimori received the least amount of support in the second electoral round. However, this does not mean that he considered Lima less important; he focused in the most impoverished places in Lima to get supporters.

Table 2 shows a clear voting pattern in the case of Lima. In both electoral rounds FREDEMO earned the most votes from the rich districts, while it received the fewest votes in the poor districts. For Cambio 90 the opposite effect occurred, it earned the most votes in the poorer districts, while it received fewer votes in the richer districts. Thus, even within Lima, one of the richest departments, Fujimori earned the support of the poor.

It is important to note that the data on Table 2 from round 1 includes information on additional parties, making it difficult to directly compare percentages between Cambio 90 and FREDEMO. Even so, one can see that Fujimori earned support of the poorer districts in round 1, as well as in round 2. In round 2, the pattern is even strong as the table shows.

In sum, the quantitative analysis focused on Lima, differs from the general results of the analysis across departments in the first electoral round. However, in the second electoral round, the analysis shows that not only the poorest departments of Peru supported him, but also the poorest districts in Lima, confirming the claim that the poor supported Fujimori. Now that the quantitative analysis has provided significant evidence of this claim, one must turn to the

qualitative analysis to find the relationship between class and race, something that the quantitative analysis cannot show.

Qualitative Analysis

Before turning to the qualitative analysis of the research, it is important to explain why it is assumed that class and race are interrelated in this section. Despite the lack of evidence of voting based on race, one can still trace a pattern from the evidence available in the quantitative section. This is because as a “social phenomenon, race is intimately bound to class.”⁶⁷ In the case of Peru the legacies of colonialism make the bond between race and class very clear. The racial and classist schism continued to embody Peru after its independence from Spain. The indigenous people were left in the low-income class, while those of European origin (criollos) became the ruling minority and the intellectual elite. This is because “the varied shades of meaning attached to the designations mestizo, indigenous, and criollo are socioeconomic and cultural in import as they are racial. “ Thus, in the Peruvian expression, “money whitens” one’s self concept and expectations.⁶⁸ To understand this bond between class and race, this capstone conceptualizes race from a discourse analytical perspective. In other words, I assume race to be a social construction, not a natural category.

Many consider race socially constructed. One of the most prominent scholars, Stuart Hall, in his lecture: *Race, the Floating Signifier*, helps understand how race is represented through a discursive construct. This means that he rejects grounding race scientifically and/or biologically and instead claims socio-historical and cultural reasons for constructing it and

⁶⁷ Oboler, Suzanne.” El mundo es racista y ajeno. Orgullo y prejuicio en la sociedad limeña contemporánea,” 27

⁶⁸ Hudson, Rex. A., *A Country Study, Chapter: Urban Classes*. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1992.

ascribing certain characteristics to it. ⁶⁹In the case of Peru, Oboler supports Hall's claim by explaining how race becomes a socially constructed principle of human classification. She refers to racism in Peru as a successful example of a device socially constructed and deeply rooted by ideological practices of the nineteenth and twentieth century that justified slavery, domination, and discrimination of one group by the other. ⁷⁰Thus, this is how a racially constructed colonial system emerged.

Hall's claim offers an explanation to how a racial colonial system can be created. In order to answer how society constructs the meaning of a race, he refers to 'signifiers' as the "system and concepts of a classification of culture to their making meaning practices." He states that a signifier such as, skin color, "gains its meaning because of its shifting relations of difference which they establish with other concepts and ideas in a signifying field." ⁷¹ Thus, in the case of Peru, assuming that a system of meanings is formed to create a new identity, his findings tell us that a long history of political oppression, not biological genes, can explain the construction of identity. Taking into account his research findings, the election of Fujimori can begin to be explained by studying how meaning and identity are produced.

The literature on how meaning and identity is constructed is very broad. However, for the purpose of this capstone, two concepts will be used. I assume that meaning is constructed through, "articulation" and that how receivers identify the meaning is through, "interpellation." Muppiddi defines articulation as the establishment of certain compelling links between different elements of meaning. The assumption is that there is not intrinsic connection between different elements of meaning. Interpellation refers to the way in which actors respond to being socially

⁶⁹See *Race, the Floating Signifier*. Directed by Jhally Sut. Produced by Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation . Performed by Stuart Hall. 1996.

⁷⁰ Oboler, 27

⁷¹ See *Race, the Floating Signifier*

claimed in specific ways.⁷² This capstone will try to unpack with the evidence available how “articulation” happened in the case of Fujimori’s election. “Interpellation,” on the other hand, will not be analyzed because it is hard to study the receptiveness of the people without being in the field.

My qualitative analysis has strong evidence to show the process of articulation in Fujimori’s election. The capstone will show how two chains of meanings were formed. Through an analysis of the campaign I claim that Fujimori constructed identification between himself and the oppressed peoples of Peru by 1) stressing his indigeneity; and 2) weaving common experiences of discrimination. In addition, FREDEMO’s racism in the campaign helped to construct these chains of meaning. The unintended consequences of Vargas Llosa’s using the “race card” against Fujimori, led to Fujimori’s response to use the “class card” and the rest of his common experiences to identify with the common people.

However, I also claim these two larger chains of meanings were only formed because they were brought together in relation to something else. Constructing the meaning of, “we, the marginalized people,” is possible only in opposition to not being a criollo. The racial difference between Fujimori and the indigenous people did not matter when compared with the commonality between them. In fact, Fujimori identified with the marginalized people. Thus, this analysis will show how the identity of the marginalized – in relation to the struggle against the dominant criollo minority- was created.

An Analysis of the Campaign

In this section there are four steps to show how two chains of meaning were created from Fujimori’s election. In the first step, the first chain is how Fujimori stressed his indigeneity in

⁷² Mupiddi’s *Critical Constructivism*, 26

order to identify with the people. This was possible because of the second step, where Vargas Llosa and his supporters responded to Fujimori's claim of belonging to the indigenous Peruvians. I will provide sources to justify how Vargas Llosa pulled out the "race card" by trying to convince Peruvians of how different Fujimori was from them. In the third step, I will show the unintended implications of Vargas Llosa's Campaign that benefited Fujimori. Inadvertently, the people sympathized with the discrimination Fujimori suffered. In the final step, Fujimori pulled out the "class card" to emphasize his commonality with the people. Therefore, in this step I demonstrate how the second chain of meaning, the common experiences of racial discrimination, is constructed.

Step 1: Stressing his Indigeneity

Evidence throughout the campaign conveys how Fujimori stressed his indigeneity. Fujimori's behavioral pattern and his use of campaign slogans shows how he attempted to relate to the common people.

Fujimori's Birthday: Representation of Peru's Independence from Spain

Fujimori's claim to indigeneity was possible in part because his birthday fell on July 28th, Peru's Independence Day.⁷³ His birthday was very symbolic given his efforts to emphasize his commonality with the people. Independence Day symbolizes Peru's freedom from Spain. This was a drastic move away from the criollo elite that continued to rule the country. Despite the rise of leaders who fought for the people such as the intellectual Victor Raul Haya de la Torre and the revolutionary, General Velasco, Peru had failed to bring justice to its people. The indigenous and mestizo majority remained unrepresented in the presidency. Electing a president with his

⁷³ A little after Fujimori's rise, FREDEMO supporters accuse Fujimori of lying about his citizenship. They claimed that he was born in Japan, not Peru and therefore, was not eligible to become president of the nation. This meant that he was also lying about his birthday, which fell on Peru's independence day.

birthday on this date represented the detachment of the second-class citizen status the indigenous and mestizos who had continued to live in a de-facto colonized country.

Fujimori dressed in Indigenous Clothes ⁷⁴



Fujimori caught the attention of the indigenous and mestizo people when he began campaigning in a wool-knit cap with earflaps. This cap known in Spanish as the “Chullo,” represents ancient beliefs and customs of Andean history and culture. The Peruvian “Chullo” dates back thousands of years, even before the Inca Empire. At first the inhabitants used it to protect themselves against the cold weather. Over time, however, it became a form of expression about their cultural heritage. For instance, the chullo has a mountain-shape to create a peak and represents the Andean mountains who are the Gods in Andean methodology who are believed to look after those who wear them.

In addition to the “chullo,” Fujimori also wore a “poncho” to present himself as an Andean peasant. The poncho is believed to derive from a short Incan tunic worn during the Inca Empire called an “uncu.” The uncu displayed a number of woven geometric designs or small squares called “tocapu,” which look similar to some of the Andean designs used today in

⁷⁴ Courtesy to Sakuda’s Book, *El Futuro era el Peru*

clothing. However, only the Inca and the royal family were allowed to wear the designs; it was forbidden for the common people to use them.

As for Fujimori's indigenous clothing, it is important to analyze which kinds of garments he was wearing and which materials they were made of. In the Inca Empire, only the nobles were allowed to wear *cumbi* (garments made of vicuña wool, which was considered to be the finest wool). Today vicuñas are considered endangered, so there are laws prohibiting Andeans from hunting them. After vicuna, the next best wool is alpaca, which is much softer than llama wool.⁷⁵ Was Fujimori wearing a poncho made of llama wool to appeal to the "common people" or was he wearing a finer alpaca poncho, perhaps portraying himself as "higher" or superior to the common people? The same question goes to how Fujimori decided to wear this "chullo." From an analysis of the wool material on his campaign pictures, Fujimori decided to wear a red poncho, unlike a white poncho, which is typically worn in the coast of Peru. The red poncho is normally worn in the Andean region, where the poorest departments of Peru are located. The red poncho in the majority of cases is made out of wool, thus he wore the common people poncho. However, the "chullo" he wore seems to be one that a leader would wear. It is hard to find information on what exactly it was made out of. However, there is evidence that the leader in Andean communities tended to wear a bigger and colorful chullo. Fujimori's chullo does not seem to be that big, but it is very colorful. It seems that even if he was wearing it to portray himself as "higher" than the common people, he was also doing it so to communicate his status as a respected and loved leader. Thus, Fujimori became an emblematic leader.

⁷⁵ Casteñada, *Traditional Dress of Peru*, 12

Slogan: “A President Like You”

When Fujimori did not dress in traditional clothing, he identified himself in other ways. He continued his campaign also drinking chicha Morada (purple corn drink traditionally drunk by the Incas) and eating popular foods (not international food that the elite in Lima enjoyed).⁷⁶ Fujimori also danced with the crowds as many leaders in Andean communities do. He drove in a converted tractor dubbed the “Fujimobile” after the illusion of the “Papamovil” on which Pope John Paul visited Peru. Along religion lines, he proclaimed he was not an atheist, agnostic nor an evangelical. He proudly called himself a catholic contrasting himself with atheist contender Vargas Llosa and claimed that he did not discriminate against any Peruvian based on race and religion.⁷⁷ At the end of the day, he had enough tools to communicate to each indigenous that he was “A president like you.”

Other Slogan: “Honesty, Technology and Work”

Fujimori not only stressed his indigeneity to identify himself with the common people, but he also stressed his foreignness (Japaneseness). Being Japanese-Peruvian made the indigenous and mestizo peoples of Peru identify with him even more. The slogan “Honesty, Technology and Work,” did not only resonate because of the Japanese stereotypes it had, but also because it actually was a similar phrase known in Incan moral code, “Ama sua, Ama quella, Ama llula” [don’t be lazy, don’t steal, and don’t lie].⁷⁸ Every Peruvian child in school learns these values. It is possible that indigenous Peruvians, many of them still influenced by their Incan heritage, felt Fujimori represented their ancient and still vivid values. An analysis of interpellation is

⁷⁶ Prior to movement of the Chef Gaston Acurio to put in the market Peruvian cuisine, Peruvian people from the upper class did not take pride in Peruvian popular food.

⁷⁷ Klaiber, Jeffy. «Fujimori: Race and Religion in Peru.» *America*, 1990 de September de 1990: 133-135.

⁷⁸ Bowen, Sally, 10

necessary to claim that by echoing their moral code, Fujimori also drew upon an idealized notion of Andean culture.

Step 2: Llosa's Response: Racism Enters the Campaign

Vargas Llosa and his supporters contested Fujimori's claim to indigeneity and tried to wield race against Fujimori. For example, FREDEMO continuously attacked Fujimori's lack of eloquence in Spanish and his accent. The racism in the campaign escalated to a point that Japanese-Peruvians began to be physically attacked and were refused the right to admission at certain public places in Lima. Even Fujimori's daughter, Keiko, was rejected at a famous ice-cream store in Miraflores, one of the upper class districts in Lima. The public aggression was effective enough that it even prevented the Japanese community from supporting Fujimori's presidency. They feared that it would bring them back to the times Peru institutionalized discrimination against them.⁷⁹

The racist response from Vargas Llosa supporters was very outspoken. After being exposed to Fujimori's slogans and pictures, Vargas Llosa's supporters took to the streets screaming "we will take the Chinaman out of the Palace (the president's house) and take him back to Japan." They went further by offending Fujimori's supporters and calling them "the dirty, ignorant, and illiterate people of this country who voted for him," proclaiming themselves as "the people with culture, who are not going to let him reach the presidency." When Fujimori went to cast his vote he was welcomed with the screams of "Little Oriental thief" and "Peru for Peruvians." Throughout the campaign they sang, "He is going to fall, going to fall, the Chinaman will fall."⁸⁰

⁷⁹ See, Sims, Calvin. *80,000 Uneasy People, All Prisoners of Peru Crisis*, New York Times

⁸⁰ These quotes can be found on Sakuda's *The Future was Peru*, 384-388

Racist manifestations and aggressions went beyond the streets and even beyond Peru. At the United Nations, Chirinos Soto, a member of parliament who acted as Llosa's spokesperson, declared that "the historic constitution of Peru" would not let Fujimori reach the presidency." Furthermore, in a press conference he said, "I do not think my country is prepared to have as president a first generation Peruvian."⁸¹ Soto reminded everyone that Peruvian presidents had only been of European ancestry. He sarcastically referred to Fujimori as a faith healer and to Vargas Llosa as a doctor. In other words, by classifying Fujimori and Llosa as such he was conveying that unlike Llosa who had real answers to Peru's deep-seated social and economic problems, Fujimori only relied on unrealistic solutions. Chirinos Soto's statements became breaking news and even Mario Vargas Llosa showed repugnance against the xenophobic comments and even spoke against Chirinos Soto's remarks. The Peruvian people had seen, heard, read, and experienced the constant racist attacks Fujimori suffered.

Step 3: The Unintended implications of Llosa's Campaign

Despite Vargas Llosa's efforts to discredit Fujimori's indigeneity, he inadvertently showed how disconnected he was from the reality of the indigenous and mestizo people. As an unintended consequence, the people sympathized with the discrimination Fujimori suffered. The racist attacks against Fujimori and the Japanese-Peruvian community ran parallel to how the indigenous and mestizos felt inferior throughout all of the history of Peru since the arrival of the Europeans. The more intense racist attacks they heard the more they felt related to Fujimori. The crowds called him "El Chino" (The Chinaman) as he gracefully would tell them "El Chinito has arrived." The indigenous and mestizo people of Peru had heard themselves been called for centuries 'indios' and little 'indios' and "fucking cholos." Fujimori as well as the common people had experienced being called derogatory nicknames with racial negative connotations.

⁸¹ See La República. "Racismo Alienta el Golpe." April 15, 1990. (p 3).

Being “El Chino” brought him closer to the common people because he did not speak proper Spanish.⁸² The majority of the people speak Quechua⁸³ and those who speak Spanish do so in a very noticeable way from the middle and upper class population in Lima. FREDEMO continuously attacked Fujimori’s eloquence and accent in Spanish. Many in FREDEMO even pointed to Fujimori’s mother, a Japanese immigrant who did not speak Spanish. It seems that FREDEMO did not realize that the majority of Peruvian mothers speak improper Spanish or do not speak Spanish at all.

Another unintended consequence that benefited Fujimori was the “faith healer” comment De Soto made. In Peru “faith healing” is one of the most popular ways of combating diseases. Faith healing implies magical elements and a trust relationship between the healer and the patient. In this sense, the fact that Fujimori was called a faith healer made him come closer to the masses.

Another example of an unintended consequence is when De Soto and other Vargas Llosa supporters referred to Fujimori as a “Peruvian of first generation.” Fujimori’s enemies intended to take votes away from Fujimori assuming that the indigenous would distrust his foreignness. However, the statement caused a contrary reaction. Gonzales Manrique said, in a figurative sense, “being a Peruvian of the first generation was a condition shared by millions of Peruvians.”⁸⁴ The children of peasants who were born in Lima shared the ambivalent identity that linked them to a rural world they left behind and to the hardships of surviving in the urban world. Gonzales Manrique draws parallels between the plight of these rural peasants and a

⁸² See Sakuda, *El Futuro era el Peru*, 375

⁸³ Quechua is well known as the language of the ancient Incas. There are between 3.5 to 4.4 million speakers of Quechua in Peru (See Gordon’s *Quechua Language*) and about seven million across the Andean region (See Lewis’ *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*)

⁸⁴ Luis Esteban Gonzales Manrique, *La encrucijada Peruana de Alan García a Fujimori*. Fundación Madrid Centro Español de Estudios de América Latina (CEDEAL), 1993 p.515

migrant like himself. To deny Fujimori his “Peruvianess” was to deny the “Peruvianess” of the majority of voters. A journalist who collected the opinions of some Quechua peasants was told by one of them, “We have voted for Fujimori, because he is like us, a foreigner in his own land.”⁸⁵ This statement conveys that Fujimori’s election also represented the continuous struggle for de-colonization, a way for the indigenous majority to re-claim their own land. Since the 1500s with the arrival of the Europeans until the 1990s the indigenous had felt mistreated as second-class citizens in their own country.

Step 4: Fujimori’s Class Card: Extracts from the Presidential Debate

Since Vargas Llosa’s campaign had unintended consequences, Fujimori used this as an opportunity to emphasize his identification with the common people. The presidential debate is a perfect example of the time he demonstrated the bind between race and class. In the beginning of the debate Vargas Llosa said, “I see that my adversary, Fujimori, has come raising his samurai sword, and prepared to give knocks”.⁸⁶ The use of the sword samurai, which represents a brave Japanese warrior, tells us how tactical Vargas Llosa was in using race against Fujimori’s advantage. In response to Vargas Llosa’s racial attacks, later during the debate Fujimori said, “It is necessary to get rid of their myopia and rather to look in depth to the real Peru, the “*Cholo* Peru,” referring to how politicians have addressed the levels of poverty in the country.⁸⁷ In this statement the meaning evoked by the word “Cholo” was very different from its common use. ‘Cholo’ colloquially is a racist word to refer to indigenous Peruvians. However, Fujimori used this racist word with a good connotation. Fujimori fought back against Vargas Llosa by pointing out that Vargas Llosa did not belong to the “Cholo Peru” but to the politicians who suffered from

⁸⁵ Ibid, 515

⁸⁶ Sakuda , Alejandro, *El Futuro era el Peru*, 501

⁸⁷ Ibid, 501

myopia. In this context, he is using Cholo on “class terms.” It was not necessary to be indigenous to belong to the Cholo world, but to have undergone similar experiences just like Fujimori did. Furthermore, Fujimori made sure he made his resemblance to the people noticeable by saying in regard to agrarian development that “Peru is aware that I know the peasant, that I understand him because I have worked with him, next to him. Because I understand the small and medium producer, they know I will defend them and I will bring about their development.”

⁸⁸The fact that he was the rector of the Agrarian University and was specifically interested in agrarian reform was an advantage for him. ⁸⁹ Fujimori claimed he belonged to the “Cholo Peru,” even though he was not indigenous. Their common experiences brought them close together.

After Fujimori’s statements and before the debate culminated, Mario Vargas Llosa once again attacked Fujimori by saying “My adversary is not that great of a Samurai as he appears on the pictures. His sword movements have not hit the mark.” ⁹⁰ Metaphorically he tried to portray Fujimori not only as a foreigner, but also as a failed foreigner. Ironically though, the previous quotes show how Fujimori was the one who made Vargas Llosa appeared as the true foreigner.

This debate is about race, class and indigeneity. It is very important to understand why Fujimori, a reserved, stern-faced man and a hardly a gifted politician, was able to beat the aloof Vargas Llosa in the debate. This was because Fujimori was able to re-define what it meant to be Peruvian by invoking class to deflect the race card. This construction of a larger chain of meaning can be seen in the Appendix, which tries to portray how class is one of the common experiences that allowed Fujimori to identify with the people.

⁸⁸ Ibid 503

⁸⁹ Agrarian development was an important topic Peru was haunted by the 1969 failed agrarian reform by President Velasco. Furthermore, land reform was one of APRA’s main goals. Fujimori brought back the hope to be able have another agrarian reform.

⁹⁰ Ibid 508

Part 2: Fujimori is One of Us, Not a Criollo

Fujimori's election revealed a deep racial and classist divide in Peru. The analysis of the campaign shows how Fujimori was able to appeal to the previous marginalized indigenous and mestizo majority by creating two chains of meanings of identity in relation to being against the criollo. He did so first by stressing his indigeneity. However, Fujimori saw himself challenged by racial attacks and he drew parallels between him, a Japanese-Peruvian, and the indigenous disenfranchised population of Peru. He minimized the racial difference between himself and the common people, and instead emphasized how common experiences among them transcended racial differences.

In conclusion, the analysis points to the central role common experiences played. This capstone claims that it was a combination of the understandings, ideas, and meanings that are inter-linked to one another to form a larger chain of meaning based on similar experiences of discrimination. Thus, in this way the identification created between Fujimori and the indigenous made common experiences transcend race. By identifying beyond race a new sense of what it means to be part of the marginalized people emerged.

However, this form of identification makes sense only in relationship against not being criollo. For example, the fact the two vice presidents (San Roman and Carlos García) on his ticket were of indigenous and African ancestry only highlighted that he was not a criollo. According to Vice-President San Roman they were⁹¹ “El Chino, El Cholito, y el Negrito.” These are the affectionate discourse of Latin-American racism to refer to anyone from different descent other than European. Fujimori affirmed that he was el “Chinito” and along with the “Cholitos” he would defeat the “blanquitos.”⁹² These words were used with the same purpose, to

⁹¹ Sakuda, *El Futuro era el Peru*, 407

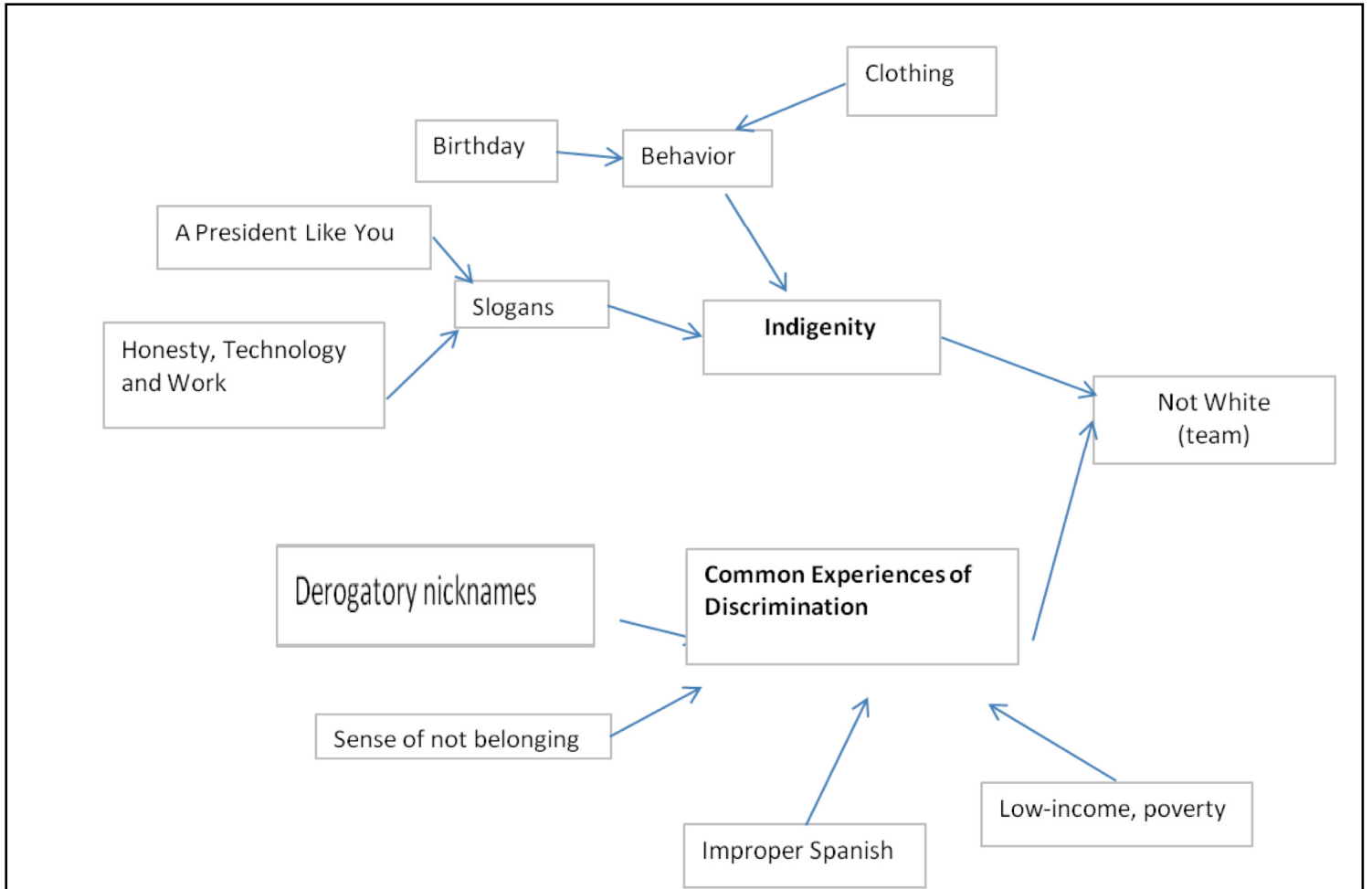
⁹² ‘Blanquitos’ is the diminutive recourse for those of European descent in Peru.

distinguish from the criollo elite. Fujimori used the words without a racist connotation, and instead turned them in a way to unite him with the others. He represented the union of three races that had been discriminated together under one umbrella. Thus, to an extent the argument holds that the fact that Fujimori was Japanese, meant above all, that that he was not a criollo, and was therefore one of them. I leave the task of this relational analysis as a point of departure for further scholarship. I sought only to demonstrate the construction of meaning and identity through the process of articulation. I also leave the task of interpellation to further research in the field.

Conclusion

This capstone aims to contribute to the scholarly analysis of Fujimori's election by showing how the common people identified with Fujimori. The conclusion of the qualitative analysis points to how issues of class and race cannot be ignored in the election in a country characterized by a racial and class colonial system. What this study tells us is that we need to look more systematically at the role of identity and meaning in electoral politics in countries that have deep-seated cleavages. Electoral strategies (as explained in the first two lines of thinking) are not enough to explain extraordinary elections and unusual elections such it was the case in Fujimori's 1990 election.

Appendix



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