Voting Patterns and the Rise of Parliamentary Parties in Peru’s Congress, 1860 – 1879

Ulrich Mücke

Introduction

Peru’s political history has long been understood as a sub-field of economic and social history. Political conflict was seen as the reflection of socioeconomic interests, and politics could therefore be explained by analyzing social and economic conflicts. From the end of the 1960s to the beginning of the 1990s there was little scholarly work that focused on Peruvian political culture.1 However, interesting insights in political history have been made in the last decade. First, it has been demonstrated that all social groups found ways to articulate their political interests (Thurner 1997; Mallon 1995). Many recent studies have led to conclusions not foreseen by – or even contradictory to – the socioeconomic interpretation. Second, scholars have paid more attention to the political and/or public sphere, showing that political power could not be legitimated except in this sphere. Economic and social power did not transform automatically into political power (Aljovín de Losada 2000; Forment 1999; Forment no year). Finally, political ideas and mentalities have become a renewed field of studies. Although scholarly results are contradictory, there is no doubt that we must pay more attention to the contents of political debates and ideas for a better understanding of nineteenth-century Peru (McEvoy 1997; Gootenberg 1993).

Students of political history have until today shown very little interest in institutional history.2 There are some important studies about nineteenth-century elections that demonstrate that elections provided important possibilities of effective – though in many cases illegal – political participation (Peralta Ruiz 1996; Peralta Ruiz 1999; Peloso 1996; McEvoy 1994; Mücke 2001).3 However, there are only very few studies on national government or policy, political administration or political geography, the judiciary or Congress. As a result, we have learned much about Peruvian political culture in the past ten years, but we remain nearly as ignorant as before as far as the history of political institutions is concerned.

This article focuses on the history of Peru’s Congress in the 1860s and 1870s.4 It analyzes the roll-call votings of these years as well as some congressional debates that show how members of Congress interpreted their own political behavior. The main concern of this article is to place Congress within the broader political conflicts of the time. I want to show that Congress did not only serve as a platform for political debate but that it was also an important arena for the formation and/or consolidation of political factions and parties. I will concentrate on the Chamber of Deputies because individual political behavior
remained strong in the Senate, whereas political action in the Chamber of Deputies was heavily influenced by strong parliamentary parties and their leaders. I will argue that the formation of parliamentary parties was a response to the concrete requirements of political conflict. In other words, it was necessary to unite a considerable group of Congressmen for winning votings. This was one outstanding reason for the rise of the Partido Civil, one of the most important political parties of that time and of Peruvian history in general. I do not deny the importance of political ideas, clientelist structure, and local society for the formation of political groups and factions. But I want to show that the way political groups were constituted was closely related to the requirements of the political sphere. Finally, the article will attempt to show that the ideas on political parties began to change in the 1870s, and that this was mainly due to the existence of political parties in Congress.

**Congressional Life**

Our knowledge of congressional life in nineteenth-century Peru is still very limited. There are a few major studies published at the beginning and the middle of the twentieth century (Dancuart 1906ff.; Ayarza 1921; Delgado 1929; Cámara de Senadores 1955; Echegaray 1965). These books offer basic information about legislative history, as for example, the names of members of Congress, laws debated and passed by Congress, etc. However, they do not offer interpretations or analyses of congressional history (for any period) more than going behind a simple collection of basic data. Most recently, there has been a publication with the misleading title ‘Parlamento y sociedad en el Perú. Bases documentales, siglo XIX’. It is a collection of papers from congressional committees concerning political geography (i.e. borders of departments, provinces, etc. and the assignment of village-, town-, etc. status) and explorations made or to be made in the Amazon region. In its introduction, it is said that the study of the committees is complementary to that of Congress (Congreso del Perú [ed.] 1998, vol. 1, p.XIV). But we still lack any serious and modern study on nineteenth-century Peruvian legislative history. Therefore, I will now give a short overview of the way Congress worked between 1860 and 1879.

In legislative history, the years between 1860 and 1879 constitute one period. Congressional life was legally regulated by the Constitution of 1860 that ruled – with minor interruptions – until 1919. Articles 44 to 77 of this Constitution regulated congressional composition and responsibilities. Detailed regulations about congressional procedures were made in the standing orders of Congress that ruled unchanged during these years. Congressional reality, however, divided this period into two clearly distinguished parts. After the end of Castilla’s presidential term in 1862, the decade was characterized by the early death of his successor, San Román, and weak Presidents such as Díez Canseco and Pezet, as well as the armed conflict with the Spanish war ships in 1865/66 and the revolutions of 1865 and 1867 under the leadership of Prado and Balta, respectively. The 1870s, in contrast, did not experience any successful revolution before the war with Chile. The Presidents (Pardo and the already mentioned Prado), were elected according to the provisions of the Constitution.
Thus, Congress could meet regularly in the 1870s, whereas it had been heavily affected by the general political turmoil in the 1860s.

According to the Constitution, Congress had to assemble every two years on July 28. An ordinary Congress lasted for a period of 100 assembly days. It was usually prolonged for fifty additional assembly days, which meant that Congress met between July and January of the following year. The government had the right to call for an extraordinary Congress that could assemble until May. This happened three times in the 1870s. The many obligations of Congress were the reason for a constitutional amendment in 1879 that determined that it should meet every year instead of meeting biannually. The amendment would have meant that the period between the legislatures would have been reduced from approximately one year to six months. However, the war against Chile impeded the realization of the new law. Until 1874, Congress was represented by a Permanent Commission (Comisión Permanente) in the months with no congressional sittings. The Permanent Commission was composed of about twelve members of Congress, and was thought to express the will of Congress. However, it did not have the same rights as Congress and, therefore, proved to have no power at all in dealing with conflicts between different branches of the state. It was finally dissolved in 1874. The amendment of 1879 would have strengthened Congress because it would have increased its sitting time. The intended passing of that amendment was a sign that the members of Congress had wanted to play a major role in national politics.

Congress was divided into two chambers: the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. Senators were elected by departments, and deputies by provinces. The number of Members of Congress elected by each department or province was proportional to the size of the respective administrative unit. According to the number of provinces a department had, it elected one to four senators. For up to 45,000 inhabitants, every province elected one deputy. For every 30,000 additional inhabitants, one more deputy was elected. These specifications were not enacted before the war with Chile because public administration lacked knowledge of the size of the population. The number of deputies was, therefore, determined by a law of 1863 giving four deputies to the provinces of Lima and Jauja, three to Chota, two to thirteen more provinces, and one to the rest of the provinces.

Congress was an assembly of provincial elites. Candidates, especially those in the elections of the deputies, had little chance to win if they were not from one of the leading families of the province. Therefore, if one is to refer to the geographical background of its members, the composition of Congress should be called national. However, if one is to refer to the social position of its members, it was an elitist institution.

Congressional discontinuity was not only caused by uprisings and wars. It was also the result of electoral laws and the individual behavior of Congress members. One third of Congress was elected every two years. Although it was legal and common practice to present oneself more than once in a congressional election, few people were members of Congress for more than 6 years. For example, only 14 men were members of Congress throughout the whole period from 1868 to 1879, that is less than 10 percent of the members that an average Congress had. The composition of Congress changed not only through elections but also through the voluntary retirement of individual members during
the legislative period for which they had been elected. Retirement was facilitated by the electoral law that established the election of a substitute for each member of Congress. This substitute would occupy the seat in case of a vacancy. Congress members could even be replaced for a few sessions and reinstated later. Thus, the retirement of members increased the number of people who participated at least once within a legislative period. In 1872, for example, the Chamber of Deputies should have had 112 members. However, there were actually more than 123 deputies participating throughout the period. Especially at the end of an ordinary legislative period, many members of Congress retired and were replaced by their substitutes in the subsequent extra-ordinary legislative period. Although we do not know the exact number of substitutes who participated in each legislative period, it can roughly be estimated that between 10 and 25 percent of its members retired—completely or for some sittings—before the end of every legislative period (including extraordinary terms).

In contrast to the great number of people who participated in the sittings, very few took part in debates. In the prolonged discussion of the Dreyfus Treaty (one of the highlights of Peruvian parliamentarism in the nineteenth century) a mere 27 persons spoke in the Chamber of Deputies. Three more deputies participated in the heated debate about congressional charges against the Ministers who had served under José Balta, a former President. In the Senate, this problem was discussed by only 18 persons. Laws concerning issues of minor interest were discussed by significantly fewer members of Congress. For example, only 10 deputies took part in the discussion about the insurrection of Piérola in 1874.

On the one hand, the composition of Congress was constantly changing—increasing the total number of members within a period—while, on the other hand, only a very small number of Congressmen participated in debates. Although this group of participating members varied as well, the majority of Congress’ members spoke only once or, for that matter, did not speak at all in the 150 working days a legislative period would last. However, given their great number, the silent members played an important role in the formation of parliamentary parties. Thus, the congressional debate alone did not produce parliamentary parties; the roll-call votings were of central importance because they obliged the silent members of Congress to publicly express their opinions.

According to the Constitution, laws concerning public finance had to be voted by roll-call. Additionally, any issue had to be voted by roll-call if the majority of the respective Chamber decided to do so. The most important subjects of the roll-call votings in the 1860s and 1870s were public finance and guano policy. Fewer roll-call votings were held on nitrate and development policy (such as railroads, immigration, etc.). The most important single issue voted by roll-call were accusations against former or active Ministers. A great number of the roll-call votings in 1864 and 1872 dealt with such accusations.

Participation in roll-call voting was high. On average, 77 deputies and 29 senators voted. In 1868, participation was significantly lower with 71 deputies and 22 senators taking part in the vote. These numbers, however, do not mean that Congressmen participated regularly in roll-call votings. Because of high fluctuation, nearly one-fourth of senators and almost one-third of deputies were absent during more than 50 per cent of the roll-call votings during their
respective legislative terms. Only a minority participated regularly in the roll-call votings. That is to say, less than 40 per cent of the senators and only a little more than one-third of the deputies voted in at least 80 per cent of the roll-call votings of their legislative term.

Without the substitute members of Congress, work of Congress would have been difficult or even impossible. Although no minimum number of Congressmen was required for any ballot, it would have been ridiculous to hold votings with only ten or twenty people. It would have been legal, but Congress would have lost its political legitimacy to make laws in the eyes of the public. The substitute members guaranteed institutional continuity and legitimacy. However, fluctuation did not favor the formation of political parties because it made continuous work within a stable group of men difficult. Many members of Congress generally retired from the sittings between an ordinary and an extra-ordinary legislative term. We do not know their motivations. It is most likely that obligations in their own provinces of origin were of central importance for their retirement. The national composition of Congress was one of the most important reasons for the changes in its formation.

It would make no sense to speak of parliamentary parties without the existence of contested votes in Congress; and it would be impossible to analyze parliamentary parties without a high number of roll-call votings. In the ordinary and extra-ordinary legislative terms in 1860, 1864, and from 1868 to 1879, there were 207 roll-call votings in the Chamber of Deputies and 132 in the Senate. The two Houses voted together on eight occasions. However, we will treat these eight ballots as if they had been realized separately by the two Houses. Although in some of these legislative terms only a few roll-call votings were held, in eight legislative periods in the Chamber of Deputies and in six legislative periods in the Senate enough roll-call votings took place to analyze them quantitatively.

Votes were usually contested. Counting the percentage obtained by ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ votes, the average result in the Chamber of Deputies was 71 to 29 and in Senate 75 to 25. About one-third of the votes in the Chamber of Deputies can be described as highly contested, as both ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ votes obtained more than 40 per cent. By contrast, about one-fifth of the votings can be classified as highly contested in the Senate.

We can thus meet the requirements for our study: a sufficient number of roll-call votings to realize a quantitative analysis and a voting pattern that shows the existence of political conflict expressed through opposing votes. We will show that these results were not the consequence of more or less chaotic, individual behavior of independent Congressmen but rather, especially as far as the House of Deputies is concerned, the consequence of the existence of relatively cohesive parliamentary parties.

**Voting patterns in the Chamber of Deputies**

In this article, parliamentary parties are defined as groups of members of Congress voting homogeneously within a single legislative term. Generally, there were no parliamentary parties that existed throughout different legislative terms. This was due to the changes of Congressmen caused by voluntary retire-
ment or by the elections held in two-year turns. These elections renewed one-third of congressional seats. In order to survive different legislative terms, a parliamentary party had to be part of a political party that, due to its activities, played a role in the public sphere. This was notably the case of the Partido Civil, which I will analyze below.

Table 1. Parliamentary Parties in the Chamber of Deputies, 1864 – 1878

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Total no. of members</th>
<th>In % of all deputies*</th>
<th>In % of deputies with over 50% participation</th>
<th>In % of average no. of voting deputies</th>
<th>In % of members of parliamentary parties</th>
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<td><strong>84,0</strong></td>
<td><strong>89,5</strong></td>
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<td><strong>73</strong></td>
<td><strong>56,2</strong></td>
<td><strong>92,4</strong></td>
<td><strong>93,6</strong></td>
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*All deputies are those deputies who voted in at least one roll-call voting.

In 1864, there were three parliamentary parties in the Chamber of Deputies (see Table 1 for statistical data on the different parties in the Chamber of Deputies). One of them had 43 members, the others eight and six respectively. These 57 deputies accounted for two thirds of all the deputies with more than 50 per cent participation in the roll-call votings.16 That is a high quote of organization, largely caused by the biggest of the three parties. These 43 persons were those responsible for the anti-governmental politics of the Chamber of Deputies. The head of the party was the former President, José Rufino Eche-
nique, who was then President of the Chamber of Deputies. He was the traditional leader of the conservatives, while the head of the liberals, Ramón Castilla, had been chosen to be President of the Senate. In 1862, these two opposed caudillos had found a compromise candidate for the Peruvian Presidency, Miguel San Román. But following his early death, both Vice-Presidents took over the Presidency (first Diez Canseco, then Pezet), but Echenique and his followers did not support them. Eleven of the 24 roll-call votings dealt with the accusations of Ministers under Diez Canseco and/or Pezet, some of whom were in power when the accusations were voted on. Five more roll-call votings were held on general complaints or prohibitions concerning the government. In total, two-thirds of the roll-call votings consisted of political attacks against the government. Echenique’s party generally won the votings so that the Chamber of Deputies can be described as clearly opposed to the government. Pezet’s weakness is seen in the small number of deputies who voted homogeneously in favor of the government. Only one of the two small parties supported Pezet throughout the whole legislative term. The other one only began to support him in the middle of the term. The fall of Pezet one year later was clearly anticipated by the strong, even obstructive, opposition and by the limited support Pezet had in the Chamber of Deputies. That does not mean that Pezet was overthrown by the Conservatives. On the contrary, the new President, Prado, was a liberal (but an enemy of the former liberal President Castilla who died in a revolution against Prado). Nevertheless, this shows that Pezet’s political power was obviously very limited in 1864.

After Balta’s revolution against Prado, the 1868 Congress was quite different to the one of 1864. There was no important parliamentary party. Parliamentary parties only accounted for about one-fifth of all the deputies who participated in more than 50 per cent of the roll-call votings. Groups of this size had no real importance in the roll-call votings. 1868 was a legislative term with a much more individual voting pattern than in 1864. This prevented Congress from emerging once again as an opposing party against the executive power. The limited importance of Congress in politics in 1868 might be the reason for the reduced participation in roll-call votings. It was clearly the lowest participation rate of all terms analyzed in this article. The lack of strong parliamentary parties should not be confused with the lack of political conflict. Votings in 1868 were highly contested. Indeed, nearly 50 per cent of the roll-call votings had more than 40 per cent of ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ votes. Nevertheless, there was no conflict that led to the formation of clearly distinguished groups.

The voting pattern changed completely in 1870 because a conflict had arisen which divided the political elite. In August 1869 the government had signed a treaty that granted the French Dreyfus merchant house a monopoly concession in the guano export trade. The Peruvian merchants had lost one of their most lucrative businesses, one that had been at the centre of Peruvian export-economy for many years. Opposition against the Dreyfus-treaty was strong and clearly voiced in Parliament. Governmental deputies closed ranks and three parliamentary parties emerged with a total 71 deputies counting for nearly 85 per cent of the deputies that participated in over 50 per cent of the roll-call votings. The biggest and the smallest party supported the government while the third one opposed it.

This is the first legislative term we will analyze in this article where govern-
ment and opposition were both supported by parties in the Chamber of Deputies. The conflict caused by the Dreyfus-treaty divided government and opposition in Parliament. This division affected all votes throughout the legislative term. Statistically, the votings on the Dreyfus-treaty did not play a decisive role in party formation. Conflict between government and opposition was not only about the Dreyfus-treaty. The opposition expressed the will of the new coastal bourgeoisie to participate more actively in politics and to stop military caudillos from taking measures affecting their business interests. The 1870 legislative term was the beginning of organized and independent bourgeoisie (some scholars call it oligarchic) politics. The antagonism between opposition and government in the Chamber of Deputies was the prelude to the highly contested electoral campaign that led to a nationwide mobilization of the opposing forces in 1871/72.

The results of the 1871/72 elections are known. Manuel Pardo became Peru’s first civilian President and the first person that had won a presidential election while being opposed by government. The political mobilization reached its climax with a military coup that attempted to hinder Pardo’s takeover. Congress (including Pardo’s opponents) unanimously declared the coup illegal, and the military was defeated by a well-organized popular uprising. The ordinary and extraordinary legislative terms of 1872 and 1873 were strongly coloured by these events. In 1872, the pro-government party in the Chamber of Deputies had 60 members, which is almost three-quarters of the deputies who participated in more than 50 per cent of the roll-call votings. The opposition, composed of only a small group of eight persons who voted consistently against the majority, was very weak. The most important issues voted by roll-call in 1872 were accusations against the ministers of Balta, the former President. In many sittings the Chamber of Deputies resembled a court of justice. Although only one third of Congress had been renewed in the elections of 1871/72, the pro-Balta party of 1870 had nearly disappeared. The reason might have been the political mobilization in 1871/72 that induced many followers of Balta to change sides. Furthermore, through the years, there were a number of Congressmen that always voted according to the majority.

The voting pattern of 1873 resembled that of 1872 in many ways. The opposition remained weak. The Chamber of Deputies continued supporting President Pardo, but Pardo’s followers were divided into different factions. All supported Pardo but disagreed on several issues. Once the turbulent years of 1869 (Dreyfus-treaty) and 1871/72 (elections and military coup) belonged to the past, the unity of Pardo’s followers could not be maintained. The disintegration of Pardo’s movement continued in 1874/75. Only 33 deputies belonged to one of the two parliamentary parties that supported Pardo. The opposition slowly recovered. Indeed, the number of deputies in the government-opposed party had almost doubled. If one considers the first half of the 1870s it is obvious that Pardo did not succeed in establishing a strong party that would constantly support him. On the contrary, the peak of Pardo’s movement was during the elections of 1871/72 and the 1872 legislative term. Thereafter, the movement began to disintegrate. The Partido Civil, as Pardo’s movement would be later called, did not emerge in the early 1870s as a strong and continuously working political party. In the Chamber of Deputies the power of the Partido Civil (the
name that we can give to the parliamentary parties that supported Pardo) continuously declined.

The Senate

Parliamentary parties did not gain much importance in the Senate because the Senate’s pattern of politics differed from that of the Chamber of Deputies. I have already mentioned that only 132 roll-call votings were realized in Senate in 1860, 1864, and from 1868 to 1879 while 207 took place in the Chamber of Deputies during the same period. The main reason for this difference was that the Senate did not vote as many accusations against Ministers as the Chamber of Deputies did. The Senate was much more concerned with ‘technical’ questions such as the guano policy or railroad construction. A second important difference was the senators’ participation in roll-call votings. Senators formed a smaller and more elitist group than deputies. The Senate counted for only about one-third of the Chamber of Deputy members. Therefore, only 29 persons voted on average in roll-call votings. This percentage was still a higher participation rate than that of the Chamber of Deputies (68 per cent versus 62 per cent).18

The character of the senators’ politics did not facilitate the formation of parliamentary parties. On average, parliamentary parties were formed by only 45 per cent of the senators who voted in more than 50 per cent of all roll-call votings. In the Chamber of Deputies this figure would rise to 67 per cent. Only in one legislative term (1873, an extra-ordinary legislative period) did clearly opposed parliamentary parties exist, one supporting government, the other opposing it. In all other legislative terms only one parliamentary party existed (as in 1872 and 1874/75), or both parties either supported government (as in 1870) or opposed it (as in 1876). Political conflict between opposition and government was not expressed through parliamentary parties in the Senate (with the exception of 1873).

The Senate was more independent from governmental power than the Chamber of Deputies. In 1872 and 1876, when new Presidents came to power, the Senate maintained the voting pattern of the former legislative term. While being pro-governmental in 1870 and 1874/75, the Senate became opposed to government in 1872 and 1876. The senators’ independent voting pattern was clearly expressed in 1872. The presidential elections, the military-coup, and the popular uprising had strengthened the Pardo-movement in such a way that it could win over indecisive and even opposing deputies in the Chamber of Deputies. As a consequence, the (latter) Chamber began to accuse Ministers of former President Balta with overwhelming majorities. But the Senate accepted the accusation of only four of the 20 Ministers being charged. As one third of the seats had been newly elected in both Chambers in 1871/72, the different voting pattern showed that many senators who had formerly supported Balta had not changed their opinion. In the short run, it was not easy to win a senator’s vote.

Differences between voting patterns in the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies were probably due to the different socio-economic and political status of average senators and deputies. Senators generally stood higher in the social
hierarchy than deputies. As a consequence senators were more independent than deputies. The way deputies were instructed has been described by Manuel Costas, one of the biggest landowners in the Andean department of Puno. Four months before the beginning of the legislative term, Costa wrote to Pardo (the leader of the Partido Civil) about the deputies Váldez and Eduardo: ‘… me he reducido a llamarlo [Váldez, U.M.] para que venga aquí [a mi hacienda Chañocahua, U.M.] de donde saldrá bien convencido. Igual cosa sucederá con Eduardo…’19 Costas had already written to Eduardo: ‘… que no se separe de todo lo que le dijeran Carranza y Manzanares y que siempre se guíe de los consejos y opiniones que le diera Boza; así me lo ha ofrecido.’ The three persons mentioned above were outstanding leaders of the Partido Civil. Costas used his social position in his home province of Puno to influence the political behaviour of the deputies from the provinces in the Puno department. It would have been impossible to do this with people belonging to the same social rank as Costa. First, people from families such as San Román or Quiñones would not have accepted instruction by Costa because, in their view, nobody had the right to instruct a San Román or a Quiñones. Second, it would have been an insult to tell a San Román or a Quiñones to follow instructions from Carranza for example because Carranza was not a big landowner but an intellectual and newspaper director. While deputies could be pressured into supporting a certain political movement, senators acted as independently as they were used to outside of Parliament.

The rise of the Partido Civil

In the following part I will describe in detail the most successful parliamentary party in the second half of the 1870s: the Partido Civil. The history of this party is usually told in a very personalistic manner: after a description of the foundation during the electoral campaign of 1871/72, President Pardo’s government is analyzed. His exile in 1877 and his death in 1879 is interpreted as the decline of the party (McEvoy 1997; Miro Quesada Laos 1957). Focussing on parliamentary history however, there is another story to be told.

In 1875, Pardo’s movement (not yet called Partido Civil) entered a crisis. President Pardo wanted Prado to be his successor, whereas many of his followers preferred to support a man of their movement for the presidential elections of 1875/76. With President Pardo’s support, Prado won the elections against Montero, one of Pardo’s most distinguished followers.20 Until the war against Chile in 1879, the followers of former President Pardo were divided into enemies and friends of President Prado. In 1876, the first legislative term under the new President, Pardo’s followers were divided into three different parliamentary parties. Altogether they accounted for less than 30 per cent of all deputies that voted in more than 50 per cent of the roll-call voteings. A small group of Pardo’s movement opposed to Prado attempted to overthrow the new President in 1877 by a coup. But they did not even win support from within their own movement and were completely defeated. Although Pardo was opposed to the coup, he had to leave the country.

At this crucial moment, a third of Congress had to be elected. These elections were the first to be held under President Prado and it was clear that he
would use his power to give victory to his followers. Consequently, some distinguished leaders of Pardo's movement proposed to abstain from presenting candidates in Lima. But Montero pushed for presenting their candidates in the whole country. A committee called Junta directiva was set up and, from its first public mention in the newspaper 'El Comercio', the name 'Partido Civil' spread. Hitherto, former President Pardo's movement had not been officially called Partido Civil. It was usually referred to as Partido Pardo or as Sociedad Independencia Electoral (the name of Pardo's electoral club in 1871/72). From 1877 onwards, Partido Civil and Civilismo were the most popular terms used. Later, these terms were used for the years before 1877, as well, though contemporaries had generally used other terms. The change of terms illustrates that until 1877 the movement was seen as the following of one leader (Pardo), but that from 1877 onwards it was seen as an association of men united by their civil spirit.

Electoral campaigns in the 1870s were very expensive. The high cost of campaigning made it difficult to find candidates capable of financing a campaign on their own. In Lima, it was estimated that five candidates for Congress needed a total of about 60,000 Soles for their campaigns. This was a very important sum of money considering that it was certain that the government would try to impede the election of people opposed to the President. The Partido Civil's leaders decided that the party would pay half of the sum needed and that the rest would be divided between three of the five candidates – given that the other two were not able to pay such a considerable sum of money. We can thus distinguish two types of candidates. The first paid for his electoral campaign with his own money. Because the second could not pay for his own electoral campaign, it was then paid for by the party and/or by individual party members. As a result the second type of candidate could probably not act as independently in Congress as the first type.

The Junta directiva was set up to organize the campaign in Lima. The committee had won so much influence that it began to coordinate electoral campaigns in all departments and provinces where elections were being held. The committee met daily in the offices of the liberal newspaper El Nacional. This was a completely new way of electoral campaigning. Prior to this, campaigns had been organized by individual political leaders or by the President who made use of public administration and the armed forces to support his followers. In 1877 the opposition was able to organize itself, though it could not focus on one single leader (as in presidential elections). We can say that the Partido Civil was founded in the electoral campaign of 1871 but began its existence only in 1877.

Elections in 1877 were as chaotic as ever. In various constituencies many contenders claimed to have won the same seat. According to the law, Congress had to decide who had been legally elected. Consequently, candidates tried to win over Congress members after elections. This was no easy job. First of all, money played an important role. The Partido Civil's leaders wanted to hinder that political friends might feel any 'necessity... to sell themselves'. Even the President of the Chamber of Deputies expected to get paid by the party leaders, even though he had always been a follower of Manuel Pardo. In February the committee began to collect 'voluntary fees of the party's friends'. In April the party owned a fortune of about 3000 Soles. In the weeks before congres-
sional deliberation on elections, both President Prado and the Partido Civil invited Congress members to banquets. Party leaders organized such banquets for Congressmen from Mondays to Saturdays. Given that the banquets organized by Prado and the Partido Civil took place at the same time, one could easily calculate their influence in Congress by counting the number of Congressmen attending. Party leader del Valle proudly reported to the exiled Prado that his party’s banquets were visited by more members of Congress than those of President Prado.27

On the morning of the first assembling day of the remaining two-thirds of Congress, party leader José de la Riva Agüero visited all the party’s members of Congress to make sure they would not stay at home ‘despite all offers and intimidation of the government’.28 But the presence of party members did not automatically mean that the party would win votes on who would enter Congress. Party leaders had to make sure that party followers voted according to the party line. They decided to make internal votings within the party before any decision was made in Congress. Every party member had to promise that he would vote according to the party’s decision.29 This procedure proved to be very helpful in gaining a majority in both Chambers of Congress. Yet, the conflict within the Partido Civil between the anti- and the pro-Prado factions had not ended. Internal conflicts, for example, prevented the election of Lima’s candidates for Congress. The Senate annulled the elections in Lima. In order to guarantee the party’s unity, its leaders decided to establish a committee in August that should resolve internal conflicts so that they would not affect voting behaviour in Congress: ‘Habrá un comité encargado del estudio de todos los asuntos, que en el seno de las cámaras y fuera de ellas [sic] se refieran a nuestra causa política, para ilustrar nuestras resoluciones y regularizar nuestros procedimientos.’30

In 1878, the Partido Civil was the most important force in the Chamber of Deputies. It was divided into two parliamentary parties. The larger one had 44 members, which is more than 50 per cent of all deputies who voted in more than 50 per cent of the roll-call votings. This parliamentary party was clearly opposed to President Prado. The smaller one had 20 members, i.e. about one-fourth of all deputies who voted in more than 50 per cent of the roll-call votings. The smaller group was not as clearly opposed to Prado as the larger one. For example, it voted against the accusations of some of Prado’s Ministers. However, the two groups generally voted in the same way, thus constituting an overwhelming majority. The third group was an independent movement in which conservatives and liberals could be found. It was not pro-governmental.

The Chamber of Deputies’ character was really exceptional in 1878. First, the Chamber was clearly opposed to government. In none of the analyzed legislative terms were there so many deputies opposed to the government as in 1878. In 1864 the Chamber’s majority did not support the President in power either. But in 1864 only 60 per cent of all deputies voting in more than 50 per cent of the roll-call votings belonged to the opposition; in 1878 more than 80 per cent belonged. Second, the two most important parliamentary parties were not organized by one leader, but by a group of leaders who did not always agree on important issues. In 1864, former President Echenique was President of the Chamber of Deputies. He was the leader of the most important parliamentary party. In 1878 when former President Pardo was in Chile (until September), the
most important parliamentary party opposed his pro-Prado politics. The elec-
tions of Congressmen and the votings in Congress had forced the party to
adopt measures that transformed the Partido Civil from a personalistic into a
political party.

**Debating the Role of Political Parties**

In the second half of the 1870s deputies began to discuss the changes that had
occurred in their chamber with the formation of the Partido Civil. The opposi-
tion against party politics in Parliament was best illustrated by a debate on the
accusations against two ministers of President Prado. The Partido Civil ac-
cused these ministers in power of having made some illegal decisions. There-
fore, Congress intended to initiate legal proceedings against the two ministers.
However the supposed illegality of their decisions was not to be seen as the
reason for the accusations. The accusations were raised simply to impede polit-
ical decisions that did not find approval within the Partido Civil.

Deputies defending the two ministers compared their behaviour to that of
some ministers under former President Pardo. They concluded that if ministers
of President Prado were going to be accused, then former President Pardo’s
ministers should be accused as well. When this failed to happen, it was said that
the accusations against Prado’s ministers were the result of ‘party interest’. The
defenders of Prado’s ministers concluded that the deputies, called civilistas,
were using different criteria to judge Pardo’s and Prado’s ministers. (*Diario de
los debates 1878*, vol. 2, p.456-7). When a member of the Partido Civil then
invited his opponents to accuse Pardo’s Ministers if they wished to do, they
responded that he must be making a ‘joke’, as accusations against Pardo’s Min-
isters would never be accepted in the Chamber of Deputies, ‘… conociendo
como se conoce la índole de las mayorías parlamentarias de antes y de ahora,
que se han disputado el aplauso ciego y frenético de cuanto hizo y pensó hacer
e el Gobierno civil.’ The ‘uniform and compact majority’ of the Partido Civil, it
was said, would prevent accusations against Ministers of former President Par-
do (*Diario de los debates 1878*, vol. 2, pp.484, 500).

The defenders of Balta’s Ministers had argued differently in 1872. They had
said that political interest was the real motive behind the accusations. They had
not mentioned party politics and the interest of a ‘uniform and compact major-
ity’. In 1878, this argument was new. The main point raised in 1872 was the
difference between the common weal on the one side, and personal and politi-
cal interests on the other. In 1878, party politics was seen as an enemy of the
common weal.

Not surprisingly, the members of the Partido Civil shared a different opin-
ion. Their point of view is best expressed in an early debate of the 1878 legisla-
tive term. In July, the Partido Civil had won nearly all the votes on previous
elections. Elections of Partido Civil’s members were usually accepted while
elections of the Partido Civil’s opponents were declared illegal. As a result
adversaries of the Partido Civil started to mobilize support against Congress.
They wanted to call a plebiscite in order to dissolve Congress. The reaction of
the Partido Civil was to make a congressional resolution that defended the
politics of Congress and the Partido Civil.
The central conflict is manifest in the first sentence of the resolution: ‘Tiempo hace que se procura inculcar en las masas populares la funesta idea de que el Congreso representa, no los altos intereses del país, sino los de un partido…’ (Diario de los debates 1878, vol. 1, p.85). This idea, it was said, was wrong. Because Congress was elected in the legally prescribed ways, its composition did not depend on the will of a party but on that of the people. The resolution stated that it was illogical to argue that Congress had evaluated the preceding elections in an unfair manner because the same Congress had evaluated the presidential election of Prado. In the resolution, the existence of parties was not seen as an obstruction but as a substantial part of democracy: ‘Los diversos intereses sociales y la distinta manera de realizarlos, dan lugar a la existencia de los partidos, que luchan por asumir la dirección de los negocios públicos; y en medio de esa lucha constante que es la vida de los pueblos democráticos, solo puede imperar la voz de las mayorías. […] La existencia de diversos partidos no es ciertamente una calamidad para el país, sino, antes bien, el síntoma de que late vigorosa en sus entrañas la vida republicana…’ (Diario de los debates 1878, vol. 1, p.86).

A political party, it was argued, would only gain a majority in Congress if it represented the interests of the majority. Elections decided which party represented the majority’s will. Nobody had to fear the domination of one party because all public offices would be held for limited terms only. Therefore, people who betrayed the will of the nation would be replaced quickly. According to the resolution, these were the reasons why minority groups were not allowed to question democratic institutions. They had the right to propagate their ideas and to win supporters. And, perhaps one day, they would gain a majority. But, by being a minority, they could not choose the persons who would head national affairs and, therefore, could not exert influence on the state. As a consequence, the minority did not have the right to call for a plebiscite.

In the resolution, Congress is described as an independent power of the state that is not opposed to government. The independence of the three powers is seen as fundamental. To accept the independence of the executive, legislature, and judiciary is seen as a basic condition for the existence of a state and a constitutional order. Despite political differences, this acceptance should be common to all citizens. If somebody questions the independence of the legislature, the existence of the state was considered to be in danger. ‘Asi como la desunión de los pueblos arruina a los estados, y la de los hombres mata a los partidos, así la de los poderes públicos abre la tumba de las libertades constitucionales.’ (Diario de los debates 1878, vol. 1, p.87).

According to the resolution, there would be no democracy without parties and no state without acceptance of constitutional order. This interpretation was really new because it did not recognize any public interest independent of party or personal interests. While the Partido Civil’s opponents maintained that a party could not represent the nation, the Partido Civil’s members declared that a legally constituted majority could, and that there was no other way of representing the nation since all other ways would destroy its unity. Although party politics had not been accepted by all members of Congress, a new idea of politics had arisen in Peru. The idea of the bonum commune was replaced by the idea of pluralism.
Conclusion

The findings of this article show that Congress was an important institution of nineteenth-century politics in Peru and that it deserves more attention. It would be wrong to describe Congress as a kind of social club where older men gathered to show themselves in public and make speeches without any importance. This description belongs to an anti-democratic discourse (from the left or right) but it does not correspond to historical realities. In Congress, men from all parts of the country met. For many of them involvement in politics implied material sacrifice and even imprisonment. It goes without saying that their commitment was also related to personal interests. But there is no doubt that national politics was no easy game but a hard and often dangerous business. Members of Congress belonged to the socio-economic and political elite of the country. They did not belong to a small oligarchic circle, but instead came from all parts of the country. They knew their country well, or as well as people from higher social strata are able to know social realities.

The members of Congress were not professional politicians. They had to combine political and private activities. We must bear that in mind when we analyze participation in Congress. Few people spoke in Congress, but participation in roll-call votings was relatively high. In all legislative terms a high number of Congressmen participated on a regular basis. However, there were also many members of Congress who did not regularly attend Congress or who stopped going to sessions during a legislative term. They were replaced by their substitutes, thus guaranteeing institutional continuity.

Congress played an important role in political conflict. Roll-call votings were usually contested and were an expression of political conflict within Congress. With a few exceptions there were no roll-call votings that did not divide Congress into two opposing factions. A great number of votings were highly contested, with more than 40 per cent of congressional members voting ‘Yes’, and more than 40 per cent ‘No’. In the Chamber of Deputies one-third of the votings were highly contested. Senators were more concerned with making a compromise than their fellow deputies. This had to do with the character of the Senate. Senators behaved in a more independent manner than deputies. Consequently, they could choose a neutral position more easily.

The voting pattern in the Chamber of Deputies cannot be understood without knowing its relation to the government. In most cases parliamentary parties were either pro- or anti-government. The opposition tried to use parliament as a tool to obstruct government policies. In addition to the normal political propaganda, the opposition refused to authorize important laws on finance and guano and tried to engage legal proceedings against Ministers. Until the rise of the Partido Civil, parliamentary parties emerged and were dissolved within one legislature. There was no organization that could maintain unity from one legislative term to another. This changed in the 1870s when the Partido Civil set up an organization to win elections. Sittings took place from July to February and, a few months later, electoral campaigns (to replace one third of Congress) began. As the same group of people organized party work in Congress and in elections, a party that worked continuously emerged. That being said, until the mid-seventies the Partido Civil resembled the older parliamentary parties in many ways. Parliamentary parties opposed to government in
1864 and in 1870 behaved in a similar ways. The parliamentary party that supported President Balta was not very different from the parliamentary parties that supported President Pardo. The Partido Civil did not alter politics from one day to the other. By adapting itself to the requirements of elections and parliament, it developed a new and very successful style of politics. This was a process that took several years.

Political movements, factions, and parties in nineteenth-century Peru are generally analyzed as expressions of local society, personal and/or clientelist relations or as the realization of political ideas. My analysis does not contradict these findings, though I do not think that political ideas played a crucial role in the formation of short-term political alliances. However, my analysis shows that elite politics should not be reduced to personalism, clientelism, and local society. The formation and action of national political parties was related to Congress. In Congress, people from all over the country met, alliances were made, and loyalty was tested. It is true that most men who took up office were already members of some political faction. But it is also true that they had to make alliances to enter into Congress. In many cases it is impossible to say whether they made alliances in order to become member of Congress, or whether they became members of Congress because of their alliance. An alliance made in Congress (or made to become a member of Congress) probably was of great influence on local politics. It was of great importance to be united, especially for groups opposed to government.

Whereas Presidents used public administration, police, and army forces to win elections and all sorts of political conflicts, the opposition tended to be fragmented. Congress was a place to unite the opposition because it was a place where its men came into contact and could work together. Without congressional experiences the Partido Civil would probably not have been able to mobilize so many supporters in the electoral campaigns of 1871 and 1877. Both campaigns led to overwhelming majorities of the government-opposed forces.

In the 1860s and 1870s national political power was closely related to Congress. The power of a President could be measured by the support he enjoyed in Congress. The fall of Pezet and Balta was anticipated by big opposition parties in Congress. Pardo’s power was illustrated by the overwhelming support he had in Congress. That does not mean that Congress was at the origin of political power. But it was the most important representation of the national political elite. As a result, Peru’s Presidents had to gain support in Congress if they wanted to maintain their power position. The legislation of Congress should not be considered as its most important contribution to political history. Congress was of great importance because it played a central role in the distribution of political power. No national political leader could ignore Congress. If he did, he stopped being a national political leader.

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Notes


2. See for example Gootenberg’s (1989) analysis on the difficulties of implementing a liberal foreign trade policy.


5. The article is based on chapter 3.2. of my book *Der Partido Civil in Peru* (1998). Due to new findings that are not included in the book, conclusions have been revised in some important points.

6. The role of clientelist structures is analyzed by Demelas-Bohy (1992). The importance of political programme and ideas is stressed by Gootenberg (1991) and McEvoy (1997). A combination of political programme and local rootedness is seen as the basis of political power in Walker (1999). The classical studies about Peruvian party history are Távara (1951) and Miró Quesada Laos (1957). These studies describe the rise and fall of different political movements. According to them, nearly all important national political leaders were heads of parties. But they do not analyze the character or structure of these so-called parties.

7. One of these interruptions took place between 1865 and 1867 under President Mariano Ignacio Prado. It had no major consequences and lasted only fourteen months. The Constitution is reprinted in Pareja Paz-Soldán (1954).

8. *Reglamento interior de las Cámaras Legislativa* (1876). The standing orders date from 1853 (Fuentes 1869, p.48).

9. Regulation about the *Comisión Permanente* were made in Articles 105–110 of the 1860 Constitution (Pareja Paz-Soldán 1954, pp.701-703). The dissolution of the *Comisión Permanente* is mentioned by Jorge Basadre (1969, p.82).

10. All statistical data in this article are based on the official *Diario de los debates* generally published a few months after the respective legislative term.

11. We only know the exact number (123) of persons who took part in at least one roll-call voting. There were usually some persons who did participate in at least one sitting within a legislative period but who did not take part in any vote. For example, in 1878, 142 persons participated at least once in a sitting of the Chamber of Deputies but only 130 persons voted at least once. Thus, we can estimate that in 1872 there were about 135 persons participating in at least one sitting.

12. Art. 74 of the Constitution of 1860 (Pareja Paz-Soldán 1954, p.696). The expression roll-call voting might be misleading. According to the standing orders of Congress, there were three modes of voting. First, members of Congress stood up in sign of approval or rejection of a proposition. They were counted but their names were not recorded in any official document. Second, Congressmen answered individually ‘Yes’ or ‘No’. In this case, their names were recorded in the official parliamentary papers. Third, Congress’ members voted through secret ballots. The third way was prescribed for cases that touched on personal interests. That is to say, votings were generally not secret. But only the second way of voting was called roll-call voting (‘votación nominal’) and only this way of voting gives us any record of voting patterns.
Nevertheless, formation of parliamentary parties was reflected by the first voting type, too (Reglamento Interior de las Cámaras Legislativas, chapter 10, pp.22-24).

13. The legislative period of 1860 and the Senate of 1864 are not included in these calculations because of the low number of votings in these terms.

14. Additionally, it should be mentioned that it is statistically impossible to calculate someone’s affiliation to a parliamentary party if he only participated in three, four or five roll-call votings.

15. For a detailed discussion of the statistical methods employed, see Mücke (1998), pp.350-355.

16. Calculations of parliamentary parties include only those members of Congress who participated in more than 50 per cent of the roll-call votings. There is no doubt that parliamentary parties had many more members considering all members of Congress who voted at least once. Therefore, percentages refer to those who voted in more than 50 per cent of the roll-call votings.

17. In the 1870s it was thought that nitrate would replace guano as the main product of Peru’s economy. Nevertheless, it did not play a role as central as guano in political conflict. This was mainly due to the lack of a well-organized opposition to the coastal bourgeoisie. In Congress, nitrate policy was not at the centre of the political agenda. Only six respectively five roll-call votings about nitrate-policy took place in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate between 1868 and 1879.

18. The total number refers to all deputies (respectively senators) who voted in at least one roll-call voting.


20. For Montero’s campaign, see: El Comercio, 12 July 1875 (morning ed.), p.1; 9 Sept. 1875 (afternoon ed.), p.3; 3 Oct. 1875 (afternoon ed.), p.3. For Partido Civil’s support of Prado, see: El Comercio 6 July 1875 (afternoon ed.), p.2. For Pardo’s support of Prado, see the changes of Prefects that replaced opponents of Prado by some of his friends. El Peruano, 8 May 1875, p.337; 18 Aug. 1875, p.54.


22. The rich candidates were Manuel Candamo, José Unánuez, Ignacio de Osma (later Osma was replaced by Felipe Varela y Valle). The party financed the campaigns of Juan Ignacio Elguera and Ramón Ribeyro. AGN-D2, 46-3051, Letters of Manuel María del Valle to Manuel Pardo, 22 Aug.; 25 Aug.; 6 Oct.; 10 Oct. 1877. See also Martin (1978), p.29.

23. AGN-D2, 46-3051, Letter of Manuel María del Valle to Manuel Pardo, 1 Sept. 1877.


27. Ibidem, 10 July 1878.

28. AGN-D2, 36-2488, Letter of José de la Riva-Aguero to Manuel Pardo, 13 July 1878.


30. AGN-D2, 46-3051, Letter of Manuel María del Valle to Manuel Pardo, 24 Aug. 1878. Party leaders decided to annul the phrase ‘y fuera de ellas’ because – it was said – party committees already existed for non-congressional affairs.

31. In 1878, it was expected that the government would prevent Partido Civil’s Congressmen from going from their provinces to Lima. Therefore, party leaders reminded members of Congress only to travel in large groups. Committees were set up that accompanied Congressmen while travelling. AGN-D2, 46-3051, Letters of Manuel María del Valle to Manuel Pardo, 6 July; 10 July 1878; 36-2488; Letter of José de la Riva-Aguero to Manuel Pardo, 10 July 1878.

32. Without regularly participation of a significant number of Congress members, quantitative analysis of roll-call votings would not have been possible.
33. Compare Mücke (1998) pp.233f., where I overstate the novelty of the parliamentary party which later became the Partido Civil.

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