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Ulrich MÖ¼cke. *Der Partido Civil in Peru 1871-1879: Zur Geschichte politischer Parteien und Reprasentation in Lateinamerika.* Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1998. 384 pp. 88 DM (paper), ISBN 978-3-515-07240-3.

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Parties and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Peru

This is a truly amazing book, much more ambitious than its title would suggest. The author analyzes, based largely on President Manuel Pardo's copious correspondence, the workings of one of the most important political parties in the history of Peru. In the process, he shows how the Partido Civil transformed itself from a personalist vehicle for Pardo to a true political party. In addition, Muecke provides telling insights into the workings of parties throughout Latin America, from the way members fought over elections to the voting patterns of the Peruvian Congress. This is a pathbreaking book and should serve as a model to others who want to study the politics of nineteenth-century Latin America.

After a lengthy introduction, in which the author does the obligatory summary of the Peruvian economy, politics, and society, the focus in Chapter Two is on the accession of the Partido Civil to power in the 1870s. He takes as an example the life and activities of Manuel Pardo himself, who was able to translate a small fortune into a very large one before going into politics. Muecke analyzes the economic activity of this bourgeoisie, in the process providing much evidence that the trade in Chinese coolies was one of the most lucrative enterprises in which many elite businessmen engaged. Most of the Chapter Three deals with the ideology of the Partido Civil–which Muecke terms as "moderately liberal"–in which the Indian communities are not seen as problematic and free trade and railroad development is fostered. A fascinating part of this chapter is the analysis of the various clubs that distinguished members of *limeno* society belonged to and how Pardo used some of them to advance his political goals. Political clubs, from which the Partido Civil evolved, also played an important role in the creation of a civilian-based political infrastructure. On the basis of a breakdown of party leaders and their genealogy, Muecke shows that the Partido Civil represented the interests of the Peruvian bourgeoisie.

The most interesting parts, and the core of the study, are the chapters on elections and the way in which the Partido Civil interacted with the local power structure in southern Peru. The author does a masterful analysis of Pardo's correspondence, showing how the letters created links between various factions within Lima and throughout the country. Pardo must have had a number of secretaries writing for him every day during the elections, for it was largely through letters that Pardo campaigned and created ties of loyalty between himself and individuals in the Peruvian hinterland. Important in the election campaign was the linkage with artisan groups within the urban centers as well as with military figures, for they were expected to gain or hold on to the voting booths that were contested–often violently–between members of the parties of various candidates. The voting process was fraught with street battles, in which the *gente decente* did not engage, but in which groups of the armed forces and plebeian types fought for control. Muecke's case study is the 1872 election, in which Pardo emerged victorious. Thus, the parties had to have at their disposition street fighters on their side so as to conquer or defend the voting booths where party members would then

vote. The parties or the candidates themselves paid for these artisan groups to fight for the parties' place. Thus, elections, while important legitimating devices, were not really expressions of democracy. The analysis of the Peruvian elections is extraordinary and, what archival evidence I have seen about Bolivian, Argentine, and Chilean elections, I suspect that very similar processes took place there and in the rest of Latin America.

Through a breakdown of voting patterns in the Peruvian parliament, the author shows that, initially, there was very little party loyalty. Given the rather indifferent attendance records of most congressmen and the liberal use of alternates, this is not surprising. It is interesting and important to note the actual voting behavior in parliament, which to my knowledge no other historian has done. In the process, Muecke demonstrates how the Partido Civil evolved from a loose alliance of civilians into a party that could demand a large dose of conformity for its political program. Indeed, the party survived its transformation into an opposition party in 1876 and even the exile of Pardo, as well as his assassination in 1877.

The last full chapter deals with the party in power and the way in which Pardo tried to impose his decisions on the countryside. The actual success of the *Civilista* government was mixed, a process that the author tries to explain. He does so by showing that Pardo had to work outside of Lima with the local power structures, in which local loyalties often counted for more than directives from the capital. He uses a sophisticated understanding of network analysis, in which friends and relatives played important roles and must be taken into account. At times, blood or fictive kin relations did not automatically determine political loyalties, though often they did. Using the metaphor of politics as networks is a very useful way to think about government; my sense is that this is the way much of government is still run in Latin America (and probably the United States as well). The network analogy also shows why, although in many cases people (that is, plebeians) lost their lives in these political struggles, rival political leaders rarely were under any physical threat. Politicians could not afford to eliminate rivals, since everyone was in one way or another connected. The death of a member of the elites offended even the political rivals, since often they were related to that individual. Thus, Muecke is able to critique effectively the by now reified Liberal-Conservative dichotomy, based on detailed evidence. At least in Peru, ideological differences were not as important as personalist networks. One wonders whether the Peruvian case is more typical. Is it that Latin Americanists have taken as their model for Liberal-Conservative struggles the perhaps exceptional Mexican case where it appears that the outcomes were more frequently deadly even for party leaders?

The study has many more suggestive ideas that make one revise one's ideas about nineteenth-century Latin American politics. It is unfortunate that it is only available in German, a language that few Latin Americanists in the United States know. I hope that this important study is translated soon, for it is the best political analysis of nineteenth-century politics I have seen. Through a sophisticated theoretical apparatus (which, however, does not overwhelm the text), incredibly detailed evidence, and many illuminating insights, this work breaks much new ground.

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