

perspectives of indigenous women should force us to shift the scope of what we are talking about when we refer to women's rights.

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The Strategic Use of Gender and Race in Peru's 2011 Presidential Campaign

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The final round of Peru's 2011 presidential campaign featured two dramatically different candidates. Ollanta Humala was a leftist nationalist who sought to increase redistribution to the poorest and most marginalized. Keiko Fujimori was a right-wing proponent of the free market and the torchbearer of her father's presidential legacy of overcoming economic crisis and terrorism in the 1990s. According to the extant scholarship on the relationship between left parties and gender

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equality, we should have expected the leftist candidate to support gender equality policies more strongly.¹

Instead, the campaign featured a right-wing woman successful in garnering the support of women by using a traditional discourse on motherhood, some overtures to gender equality, and a reliance on her own position as a woman. The leftist Humala, by contrast, was slow to bring gender equality into his agenda, instead garnering support from men and poor and indigenous sectors. Both candidates used gender and race in strategic ways to reshape their image and capture a broader swath of the electorate. Ultimately, however, an issue that crosscut gender and race lines — the history of forced sterilization of primarily indigenous women under Fujimori's father, Alberto Fujimori — served to tip the electoral balance to Humala.

This essay examines the dynamics of gender in Peru's 2011 presidential campaign and its interactions with race, focusing on the final round in which Fujimori and Humala faced off. The campaign forces us to question whether gender equality forms an important part of the Left's agenda in Latin America. It also demonstrates the increasingly strategic use of gender equality by both left and right candidates. Whereas left and right parties have long invoked gender, gender equality is a relatively new appeal for the Right.

On the basis of their economic and social platforms, Humala and Fujimori sat on opposite ends of the political spectrum. Humala staked out a leftist position by advocating greater state intervention in the economy, capturing rural, indigenous sectors discontented with the neoliberal economic model. His positions were more moderate than in his first run for president in 2006, yet he was the only serious leftist contender. By contrast, Fujimori advocated a continuation of the free-market economic model started by her father in 1990 and perfected by subsequent presidents. Fujimori's tough law-and-order stance and association with her father's authoritarian presidency also put her farthest to the right. While she emphasized that hers would be a democratic presidency, she asserted that her father was "the model to follow" and denied that he had committed crimes despite his guilty sentences for corruption and human rights abuses.²

1. See, for example, Haas (2010); Htun and Power (2006); Mazur (2002).

2. "Keiko Fujimori sostuvo que el gobierno de su padre 'es el modelo a seguir,'" *El Comercio* 3 April 2011.

While economic, social policy, and security proposals, as well as democratic credentials, were most significant in the campaign, gender and race also figured in prominently.³ Fujimori claimed to represent women as a woman. In the first round of the elections, she chastised other candidates who did not have women in top campaign posts, drawing attention to her position as a leading female contender, and the modernizing qualities that represented.⁴ Support for the descriptive political representation of women is often assumed to be a left position because, worldwide, the Left has a better record than the Right of getting women into elected office (Kenworthy and Malami 1999; Reynolds 1999). Yet in Peru, Fujimori's father had placed women in high-ranking political positions and passed a quota law that dramatically increased women's political representation. For both daughter and father, the emphasis on women's representation helped to cultivate a "democratic" image, and soften their associations with authoritarianism.⁵

Fujimori also emphasized, in a tepidly "feminist" manner, how her own *working* motherhood gave her special insight into Peruvian women's needs. In her final speech at the close of the first round, with her husband and children by her side, she promised poor women in one of Lima's poor neighborhoods "as a woman and a mother . . . to build child care centers . . . in order to give direct support to working parents, and above all, to single mothers."⁶ Fujimori's campaign employed more conservative motherly imagery as well. In a television interview, her political spokesperson, Rey, emphasized that "Keiko is committed to the future of Peru, Keiko is committed like a mother of her children, like a mother of all Peruvian children." Rey further compared Fujimori's vision of "hope" for Peru to the "aggression" of Humala, drawing highly gendered lines between the two candidates.⁷ Finally, Fujimori promised to rejuvenate the populist social policies targeting poor women that were once her father's trademark.

3. For general analyses of the election, see Levitsky (2011) and Tanaka (2011).

4. Two other women ran for the presidency in 2011: Juliana Reymer, who never rose above 1% in the polls; and the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance candidate, Mercedes Aráoz Fernández, who dropped out early. In the previous two presidential elections, Lourdes Flores Nano of the right-wing Partido Popular Cristiano (PPC) had run for president.

5. One can observe this tendency among other neoliberal governments in Latin America as well, in particular Argentina under Carlos Menem.

6. Speech accessed on the Fuerza 2011 Website: <http://www.fuerza2011.com>, accessed April 17, 2011.

7. Interview on Panorama Television April 24, 2011, accessible at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UihBFDRKM3I&feature=player_embedded#at=87.

Although Fujimori used women's political representation and motherhood to soften her authoritarian image, gender issues, such as abortion rights, remained off her agenda. Both Fujimori and Humala supported only therapeutic abortion, which is legal, but often inaccessible, in Peru. For Fujimori, support for abortion was at odds with her use of motherhood as a position of authority; she declared, "I am not in favor of legalizing abortion. I am a woman, a mother of a family,"⁸ Moreover, she relied on religiously conservative portions of the electorate and the Catholic hierarchy for political support, proscribing any support for liberalization of abortion.

Fujimori's gendered rhetoric paid off in support among women. According to May polls, among women, 48% intended to vote for Fujimori and only 38% for Humala. By contrast, 49% of men supported Humala and only 38% Fujimori (Instituto de Opinión Pública 2011a, 4). The poll numbers also indicated an aversion among women to Humala.

Until May, Humala's campaign had given almost no positive attention to women or issues of gender equality. The candidate had come out against abortion and civil unions during the first round of the elections, heavily influenced by the Catholic Church. His proposal for day care was usually framed as a benefit for children, not mothers.⁹ Direct competition with Fujimori in the second round and poor polling among women, however, forced his campaign to address women and gender equality.

Humala used television commercials to reach out to women. In one, seated in his living room with his wife Nadine, he states: "We want a more just country with more respect for women. They are the ones that make the sacrifices." Nadine responds: "We are the ones that take care of the health and education." The commercial emphasized inclusion of women, but it also reinforced more traditional visions of gender, highlighting women's "sacrificial" role and their importance in caring domains. Picturing Humala seated in his family home, and later joined by his two young daughters, the commercial also sought to soften the "aggressive" image that Fujimori's campaign had conjured of him.¹⁰ More radically, on May 22, Humala sought to undercut Fujimori's authority in "representing" women's interests by promising that, if elected, he would appoint women to a majority of his Cabinet posts.

8. "Postura de candidatos presidenciales sobre aborto y consumo de drogas," *El Comercio*, 29 January 2011.

9. "Humala Impulsará 'Cuna Más' en 600 distritos pobres," *Diario 16*, 1 August 2011.

10. Accessible at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSXmPCx3TE4&feature=related>.

Although Fujimori led the polls among women, Humala had stronger backing among residents of rural, majority-indigenous portions of the country. Polls following the first round showed that Fujimori's vote share was negatively related to voters with indigenous maternal language. Humala's share, by contrast, was highly correlated with voters with indigenous maternal language (Tanaka, Barrenecha, and Vera 2011). Although he is of mixed indigenous and European parentage, Humala has indigenous physical features and a Quechua name. While he did not claim an indigenous identity, he used indigenous symbols like the rainbow flag in his campaign, and in 2006 several indigenous members of his party gained congressional seats. In addition, his platform of economic and social inclusion was attractive to indigenous peoples.

In response to low support among indigenous people, Fujimori adopted some of Humala's policy proposals. She came out in favor of two items central to Humala's original platform: taxation on mining profits and a rise in the minimum wage to 700 soles. Humala, however, also suffered backlash for this support. Social networking sites like Facebook offered a multitude of racist comments against Humala, emanating primarily from wealthy Limeño youth.¹¹

In short, the final round of these elections brought Peru's profound gender and race divisions to the fore (Muñoz 2011, 12). Recognizing these divisions, each candidate moved toward the political center, strategically using gender and race symbolism and rhetoric to do so. Most interesting were the dual ways in which gender was invoked — motherhood and antiabortion stances to appear more conservative and women's representation to appear modern, gentle, or democratic.

The strategic use of gender by Fujimori, however, was exposed by the massive mobilization of civil society groups against her. Almost immediately after the first-round results revealed that Fujimori would advance to the final round, Mujeres Dignidad “No a Keiko” (Dignified Women say “No to Keiko”) launched a campaign against her candidacy. This concerted effort to turn around women's support for Fujimori focused on reminding the public of the history of human rights abuses by her father, including his massive, forced sterilization program directed primarily at indigenous women.¹² The mobilization served to

11. A collection of comments are posted at: <https://www.facebook.com/VerguenzaDemocratica>.12.

12. On these sterilizations, see Ewig (2006).

undermine the Right's tactic of strategically invoking gender equality to appear more democratic by questioning the authenticity of its position.

Mujeres Dignidad "No a Keiko" was joined by a wide variety of human rights groups, labor unions, and feminist organizations. Its May 5 march boasted 400 participants, proclaiming: "conscientious women do not vote for delinquents" and "Listen, Keiko, the country rejects you."¹³ In a direct rebuke of Fujimori's attempts to conflate femininity with democracy, the prominent feminist organization Flora Tristán disseminated the message: "Being a woman does not guarantee democratic thinking: Vote with dignity and memory."

The fact that Fujimori and members of her party refused to acknowledge the sterilizations as an abuse undermined their credibility as promoters of women's rights. Party members — even the former minister of women — asserted that these were voluntary, and spokesperson Rey (who in the 1990s had been a vociferous critic of the father's sterilization campaign) downplayed their importance.¹⁴ Fujimori said little in response to the accusations during the final presidential debate, hurting her standing with women. A victim of the sterilizations, Victoria Vigo, proclaimed days before the election: "What Keiko Fujimori demonstrates . . . is she is not interested in the pain of the women affected by the sterilizations."¹⁵

The sterilization issue succeeded in bringing together women across class and race backgrounds to oppose Fujimori. A women's collective disseminated a video of three middle-class women of diverse backgrounds remarking on her complicity with the sterilization campaigns, and how these were an affront to women's rights.¹⁶ The "No a Keiko" campaign culminated in "Fujimori Nunca Más" marches in Lima, Arequipa, Trujillo, and Iquitos on May 26. The Lima march was estimated at 10,000 participants.¹⁷

Even with this mobilization, the final election results on June 5 were razor thin: 51.4% for Humala and 48.5% for Fujimori. According to postelection polls, women were still more likely than men to have voted for Fujimori (39% of all women voted for Fujimori; 28% of male voters

13. "Colectivo 'No a Keiko' invoca a mujeres a marchar al 'Ojo que llora,'" *La República*, 5 May 2011; "Mujeres marcharan contra la candidatura de Keiko Fujimori," *La República*, 6 May 2011.

14. "Cuculiza dice que esterilizaciones durante el fujimorismo fueron 'totalmente voluntarias,'" *El Comercio*, 10 May 2011; "A Keiko no le interesa el dolor," *La República*, 31 May 2011.

15. "A Keiko no le interesa el dolor."

16. Available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctgiMNX_ZLo&feature=related.

17. "Marcha contra Keiko convocó a miles de personas," *La República*, 27 May 2011.

did so), while persons with an indigenous maternal language were still more likely to have voted for Humala (Instituto de Opinión Pública, 2011b). Given that 48% of women intended to vote for Fujimori in May, however, the drop in support among women is remarkable, even considering the tendency of postelection polls to be biased toward the winner. This indicates an important success of the “No a Keiko” movement in its ability to create coalitions across the stark cleavages of gender, race, and class. It may also be a model for mobilization in other countries with such cleavages, such as Chile, as discussed by Richards in this Critical Perspectives section.

In Peru — similar to El Salvador, as described by Viterna in this section, and to Nicaragua (Kampwirth 2008) — the Left is not always at the vanguard of gender equality. This has been true historically (Vargas 1992) but appears to be accentuated in the recent “left turn,” with the Left striving to make itself more palatable to the electorate. In several Latin American countries, we see the Left taking conservative positions with regard to reproductive and sexual rights in order to deradicalize its image. This appears to be more common in contexts where church support is crucial for election or governability — and does not align neatly along the dominant “radical” and “social democratic” left typologies (Friedman 2009).

Moreover, gender equality is no longer the exclusive domain of the Left. Both left and right candidates in Latin America strategically employ gender equality rhetoric. In particular, they promote women’s political representation in order to appear more democratic or less aggressive. In the case of Peru, Humala brought women’s representation into his campaign only after the Right made it an issue, but then reneged on his promise of appointing women to a majority of his Cabinet; he appointed only four women ministers out of 18. While it is still too early to assess Humala’s record more broadly on gender equality, his December 2011 appointment of an evangelical with no experience in women’s issues as the head of the Women’s Ministry does not bode well. Yet the strategic use of gender equality rhetoric, rather than firm political support for gender equality policies and practices, can backfire, as it did for Fujimori. The Left must also be conscious of the dangers of engaging in such double discourse.

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