

# JCAS

Occasional  
Paper

Martín TANAKA

**La consolidación  
de la democracia  
en América Latina y  
la importancia de  
la competencia política:  
Lecciones desde  
la experiencia peruana**

no.

**3**

**1999**

Democratic Consolidation in Latin America:  
Competition still Matters.  
Lessons from the Peruvian Experience

**JCAS-IEP**  
Series  
**i**

**JCAS-IEP**  
Series

i

**Martín TANAKA**

**JCAS**  
**Occasional  
Paper**

**La consolidación  
de la democracia  
en América Latina y  
la importancia de  
la competencia política:  
Lecciones desde  
la experiencia peruana**

no.

**3**

**1999**

**Democratic Consolidation in Latin America:  
Competition still Matters.  
Lessons from the Peruvian Experience**

**Resumen**

**La política en América Latina en la actualidad.  
Límites de la literatura existente**

**La experiencia peruana:  
las variables que explican su singularidad y algunas lecciones útiles**

**Consolidación democrática en América Latina:  
un modelo de etapas de las transiciones simultáneas**

**Conclusión: la competencia política importa**

**Referencias**

**THE JAPAN CENTER FOR AREA STUDIES  
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ETHNOLOGY**

SUITA, OSAKA 565-8511 JAPAN

PHONE : +81-(0)6-6878-8343

FAX : +81-(0)6-6878-8353

# **Democratic Consolidation in Latin America : Competition still Matters. Lessons from the Peruvian Experience**

**Martín TANAKA**

## *Abstract*

In this paper I examine some of the lessons that the Peruvian experience leaves for the understanding of the democratic consolidation process in other Latin American cases. Regarding the current political situation, signed by an extreme institutional fragility, I believe the Peruvian case stresses the importance of competition and pluralism (weakened after the collapse of the prevailing party system), rather than participation, democratization in a substantive sense, or an idealistic defense of liberal institutions.

I believe that the Peruvian experience provide us useful elements for the understanding of the democratic transition and consolidation process, and the many challenges that the region currently faces, what has become very confusing in the recent literature. This is the case because Peru's evolution and current institutional fragility clearly illustrate the perils that have threaded and threaten Latin American democracies. Inspired on the Peruvian case, I propose a model of analysis of the Latin American democratic experience in the last two decades, that stresses the interactions between the economic transition to a market economy and the political transition to democracy, along the different "stages" the region has traversed. If there is a space for a moderate optimism regarding the current situation, I believe it can be found in the extended perception of the exhaustion of the neoliberal paradigm, and in the increasing political competition in many countries, in the context of the presidential elections the region will have until the year 2,000.

*Keywords: Peru, Latin America, Democracy, Democratic Consolidation, Political Parties*