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Cecilia BLONDET M.

no. **9** 2001

Lecciones de la
participación política de
las mujeres

Lessons from
Women's Political Participation in Peru

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Introducción

El contexto de la década del 90

I. Las mujeres en la década de Fujimori: un nuevo sentido común

- 1. Situación actual de las mujeres*
- 2. Un nuevo sentido común*
- 3. El proceso de acercamiento de las mujeres con el poder*
- 4. Los intereses del presidente*
- 5. El encuentro con las mujeres*

II. Las mujeres en la arena política: grandes diferencias

- 1. Las dirigentas populares*
- 2. Las congresistas de todo tipo*

A manera de conclusión

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Lessons from Women's Political Participation in Peru

Cecilia BLONDET M.

Abstract

The 1990s have witnessed a rapid entry of women into various spheres of political power. This can be explained by the modernization process and by the growing influence of feminist discourse nationally and internationally. But the unprecedented number of women in positions of power in the regime of Alberto Fujimori (1990-2000) cannot be understood without referring to the coincidence of interests between the President and a group of highly trained, professional women in search of spaces to exercise leadership.

Fujimori's regime won the support of popular women through the weakening of autonomous women's organizations and the reinforcement of clientelistic social programs, in the context where his capacity to end terrorism and control inflation was highly valued. At the same time, Fujimori's explicit strategy of nominating women in the cabinet, in his personal advisory team, in Congress, and in key sectors of the State, corresponded both to his willingness to appear as a progressist leader, thereby winning the political support of women, and to his need for loyal allies.

One of the notable results of this regime was the adoption of a few laws addressing women's issues, such as an electoral quota law favoring women's candidacies. But in light of the weakness of political parties, an increasingly authoritarian and centralized government, and the predominance of a neoliberal, individualistic model in economic and political life, women's more numerous presence in politics did not lead to improved life conditions for the majority of Peruvian women. Debates in Congress and women's protagonism as defenders of an authoritarian regime reveal that women are not always the ethical, democratic and consensual actors which they are assumed to be, nor do they share identical, homogeneous interests.

Key words: women, political participation, Peru, Fujimori, electoral quotas