

WILSON, Fiona, 2013, *Citizenship and Political Violence in Peru. An Andean Town, 1870s-1970s*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan. 229 pp.

In the 1970s and 1980s, when the social sciences were being consolidated in Peru, researchers began to pay attention to the map of the country and to go to different areas of Peru. Whether it was the character of the disciplines themselves that pushed them into looking for particular spaces in order to do their fieldwork, or the approach they favored (the process of state formation, modernization theory, dependence theory, etc.), or simply because they were exploring a new area, these researchers contributed decisively to decentralizing academic knowledge. As part of this effort, they established networks both internationally and throughout Peru, which led to a variety of academic publications as well as to the creation of NGOs that combined research with projects on the local level. Knowledge about Peru became richer and more complex thanks to this dynamic and many monographs on various regions were published.

This knowledge, however, was not always distributed in a homogenous manner. If some urban centers were privileged (Piura and Cusco, for example), regions which had never received any attention from researchers also became better known. Tarma is one of these areas, as demonstrated by Fiona Wilson's most recent book – *Citizenship and Political Violence in Peru: An Andean Town, 1870s-1970s*. Wilson arrived in Tarma at the beginning of the 1970s, during the full effervescence of the Agrarian Reform, when haciendas changed hands from landowners and administrators to peasants. The author's four decades of in situ experience has given her first-hand knowledge of the processes undergone in this region, which is located in central Peru and whose integration with the country and the global market began in the mid-19th century. In order to construct the history of the region, Wilson combines personal observations, interviews with various actors that participated directly in events that took place in the 1960s and 1970s, research in local archives, and works produced by local learned people in previous years. These investigations resulted in a study that is original and makes it possible for us to discuss the relevance of a better understanding of regional dynamics through historical ethnography at a time when the country is seeking decentralized accommodation with regional authorities, as well as the financing that is being made available as a result of the exploitation of natural resources.

Nevertheless, rather than producing a regional history, strictly speaking, Fiona Wilson's purpose is to trace the trajectory of the political radicalism that emerged over the course of a century and situate it in the national context so as to understand the particularities of the local project and its possibilities of triumph and failure, who implemented it, how they gained supporters, and what happened to these projects and their champions once they began to fade away. The author shares other academics' concerns regarding the

need to understand what led to the process of political violence that brought about the confrontation between the state and terrorist groups between 1980 and 2000. Various studies on this subject have concentrated on the area where the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) first appeared – Ayacucho – as well as on the capital of Peru. Only recently have studies on other regions begun to be published. Now, the case of Tarma has been added to help illuminate this trajectory with a study covering a long period of time and a diverse group of actors, including teachers, students, and political leaders.

The central argument of the book is that there were two factors that led to the increase of violence throughout the 20th century. On the one hand, centralism as a key element in the formation of the state, which led to any option proposing regional autonomy – such as federalism and decentralization – to be discarded. On the other hand, the consolidation of radical mobilization as a form of organized political dissent, marshalled by the local opposition in the capitals of provinces. The response of the government was to declare these expressions of dissent as “illegal,” thus increasing the distance between the government and the protesters. Wilson situates the origins of political mobilization and political discontent in Tarma in the last third of the 19th century, when the local government (Provincial Council [Concejo Provincial]) became one of the principal spaces for channeling increased dissatisfaction and a desire for autonomy. It was a space that would be occupied by political parties, schools, trade or professional groups and/or, in later decades, armed groups.

The chapters of the book are organized chronologically and thematically. The author sets out to present the diverse political projects that emerged during the length of a century through the study of a combination of local political institutions (Provincial Council), intellectual projects (Indigenismo), political parties (Apra), and trade unions (Sutep). One of her most important objects of research is the Provincial Council. The Municipalities Law of 1873 empowered municipal councils, providing them with legal attributes in the areas of education, hygiene, maintenance of roads, and collection of statistics. In Tarma, these responsibilities gave the Provincial Council and its members an autonomy that led to two types of tension: first, with the population, primarily made up of indigenous people and which became the target of the Council's attempts to apply a vertically-structured process of modernization; and, later, with the capital of Peru – represented by the central government – with which the Council had to compete for resources such as land and manpower at a time when the state administrative apparatus was expanding and public works were under construction.

The creation of political projects in the 20th century is another of the main themes of the book. According to the author, some of these were framed in terms of ethnic demands, including the Pro-Indigenous Law Association (Asociación Pro-Derecho Indígena) and the Tahuantinsuyo Central Committee Pro-Indigenous Law (Comité Central Pro-Derecho

Indígena Tahuantinsuyo) while others had more popular roots such as anarchism, which later gave way to the political parties. The analysis of the appearance of parties in the region (especially the Apra and, to a lesser degree, the Communist Party) and the dynamics between these and the central government allows the author to draw astute conclusions about the difficulties that regional branches of political parties had in avoiding conflicts with directives received from their central offices in Lima; the absence of interaction between the state and political organizations in terms of the persecution of the parties by the state; the penetration capacity of political actors; and the strategies of individuals in moving from one political project to another when the former failed. Political projects tended to be presented in a way that was in accord with local culture and customs, especially those that originated in the study of folklore and Indigenismo. On this point, I am not very convinced by the link that the author suggests exists between the message of a world-turned-upside-down that was presented in indigenous carnivals and the objectives of the radical left (p. 116-117). I think that a more detailed explanation is necessary to sustain this transition, which, if it were true, would have precipitated open rebellion much earlier than those of the Maoists in the 1960s. At the same time, as has been noted by various specialists on these popular practices in other the times and places, the carnivals could have served as an escape valve and not as incitement to violence, whether open or subterranean.

This books offers a very rich panorama of the political and cultural history of Tarma, a region about which little has been known until now. The many different themes of the book, which are in dialogue with each other throughout the nine chapters, make it difficult to fully discuss them in a book review. I would like to suggest that one possible way of ending the book would have been with an epilogue about what went on in the region during the period of political violence. This would have enabled us to fully understand the peculiarity of this space in the period between 1980 and 2000, and would have served as a counterweight to the narrative provided by the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission about the expansion of violence throughout the country. Nevertheless, its open ending should not be seen as a fault of the book, but rather as an invitation to other researchers to carry out their own research about Tarma's recent past, drawing on the work of Fiona Wilson as a resource. As I suggested above, *Citizenship and Political Violence in Peru* is an important book for many reasons and contributes to our understanding of regional dynamics over a long time period.

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