Estatuto Electoral (Electoral Statute): electoral reforms promulgated by the Samanez Ocampo junta that expanded the electorate, protected against electoral corruption, and provided for elections in 1931.
Guardia Civil (Civil Guard): national police force accountable to the head of state.
hacienda: landed estate.
indigenista: pertaining to the valorization of indigenous peoples and cultures.
junta: council of military officers that governs a country after seizing power by force.
Leguiísta: supporter of, or pertaining to, Leguía.
Oncenio: eleven-year period of Leguía's rule (1919–1930).
Partido Civil (Civilist Party): dominant elite party during the Aristocratic Republic period, founded on the principle of civilian rule.
Revolution of Arequipa: Sánchez Cerro's coup of August 1930, which unseated Leguía.
Sánchezcerrista: supporter of, or pertaining to, Sánchez Cerro.
War of the Pacific: war fought between Chile and Peru-Bolivia between 1879 and 1883 (won by Chile).

INTRODUCTION

On the morning of Saturday, August 22, 1931, the residents of Lima, Peru, unfolded their morning newspapers to find the entire front page of the city's most prominent daily devoted to an announcement calling them into political action. The bolded text invited "all patriotic citizens to a great demonstration taking place today . . . the first anniversary of the Revolution of Arequipa, in honor of Comandante Luis M. Sánchez Cerro."[1] Although the event was pitched as a nonpartisan, patriotic celebration of the coup d'état that had brought down the long-standing dictatorship of Augusto B. Leguía one year before, readers understood that in effect it was a campaign rally for the architect of that coup, who was now expecting popular gratitude for his heroic deeds to catapult him into the highest office in the land.[2]

The next morning, following what had indeed been a hugely successful pro-Sánchez Cerro event the day before, supporters of the other main presidential contender, Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, awoke knowing that they would have to put on an even greater show. Haya de la Torre's APRA party had a big day planned. As the party's newspaper had declared in its own front page announcement on Saturday (in overt competition with Sánchez Cerro's call to action): "On Sunday, August 23, in the Plaza de Acho [Lima's historic

1. *El Comercio*, August 22 (morning edition), 1931, 1.

2. Sánchez Cerro had overthrown the Leguía dictatorship in August 1930. This coup had been widely popular, and many Peruvians thought that its principal leader should be rewarded with the presidency for his actions. One year after the coup, Sánchez Cerro—now running as a candidate in a legitimate presidential election—hoped to cash in on this sentiment. But this hope was left implicit in the announcement for the rally of August 22, which mentioned neither Sánchez Cerro's candidacy nor his political party.

bullring] . . . the head of the Peruvian Aprista Party will give his first lecture on doctrine, explaining the theory and aims of the Aprista movement."[3] The lack of a clearly articulated political platform had so far been a liability for the party.[4] The bullring speech promised to change that and, at the same time, to energize supporters with a renewed conviction before sending them out to parade through central Lima.

Thus the two major candidates in Peru's hotly contested 1931 presidential election squared off in the streets of the capital city. Tensions were high on this weekend of competing rallies and marches, given that the opposing camps had clashed violently in the past. But the crowds largely maintained order as tens of thousands of partisans and sympathizers converged on the colonial core, and thousands more looked on from the sidelines and down from the balconies above. The events were well orchestrated, the products of deliberate and sustained political mobilization efforts by the candidates and their parties. Many in attendance had been gearing up for weeks, in party-affiliated political organizations with names like the "First Pro-Sánchez Cerro Political Club of the Artisans and Workers of [the neighborhood of] Barranco" (Club Político Artesanos y Obreros de Barranco Candidatura Pro Sánchez Cerro No. 1) and the "Aprista Civil Construction Workers' Union" (Agrupación Aprista de Construcciones Civiles). While the prospect of taking part in the collective production of spectacle would have no doubt been exciting in its own right, the main draw was the opportunity to hear the equally charismatic candidates speak to the concerns of the historically marginalized and excluded. And the candidates did not disappoint. Each provided a vision of national renewal that promised to help ordinary Peruvians while protecting them from the parasitic elite.[5]

3. *La Tribuna*, August 22, 1931, 1.

4. The APRA leadership had been urging Haya de la Torre to release the party's official platform since at least December 1930 (see Luis Alberto Sánchez's letter to Haya de la Torre, dated December 21, 1930, reprinted in Haya de la Torre and Sánchez 1982, 27–30). The lack of a platform had allowed APRA's opponents—especially Sánchez Cerro, but also conservative elites and opponents to APRA's left—to misrepresent the party in a number of ways, knowing that Aprista propagandists had no established grounds for rebuttal. While he would not release the actual platform for another month, Haya spelled out the party program in a lengthy speech on August 23, in an effort to compete with Sánchez Cerro's self-promoting commemorative event on the twenty-second.

5. For accounts of Saturday's events, see *El Comercio*, August 22 (evening edition), 1931; *El Comercio*, August 23 (morning edition), 1931; and *West Coast Leader*, August 25, 1931, 19. For Sunday's events, see *La Tribuna*, August 24, 1931.

The events of this weekend illustrate well the sorts of strategies and tactics that both Haya de la Torre and Sánchez Cerro developed over the course of their presidential campaigns. Both candidates mobilized groups of Peruvians who had been socially marginalized or excluded from the political process in the past; they organized these groups at the local level and staged coordinated public displays of strength; and they infused their private organizing practices and public demonstrations with rhetoric that stressed the common plight and moral virtues of ordinary Peruvians vis-à-vis what they identified as a self-interested, antinational, oligarchical elite. But one would be wrong to imagine that such practices were commonplace in Peru in the first decades of the twentieth century. In fact, this election was the first time in Peruvian history—indeed, in Latin American history—that politicians had practiced what this book will call *populist mobilization* on a national scale to seek elected office. In a context in which politics had historically been characterized by elite machinations, punctuated by the occasional rebellion or coup, Haya de la Torre and Sánchez Cerro each broke with established routine to develop a truly novel mode of political practice.

This occurrence is puzzling from the perspective of structuralist theories of Latin American populism because the social, economic, and political realities that obtained in Peru in 1931 fell far short of what these theories have taken to be necessary conditions for populist politics. These theories, which have their roots in either modernization theory or structuralist Marxism, have tended to focus largely on the paradigmatic cases of Argentina and Brazil in the 1940s and 1950s; and as will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2, they see Latin American populism as resulting from a structural shift in class relations that occurred in the context of peripheral late development. But these conditions were significantly less developed in Peru in 1931 than they would be in Argentina and Brazil nearly a decade and a half later. Peru in 1931 was considerably less industrialized than were either Argentina or Brazil in the mid-1940s, its working class was much less developed, and its dynamics of elite conflict differed considerably. That is, from the perspective of the structuralist theories, conditions in Peru were decidedly *un*ripe for populist mobilization in 1931.

The problem with these theories vis-à-vis the Peruvian case runs deeper than a simple failure to identify correctly the structural predictors of populist mobilization. Rather, it is that structuralist modes of historical and comparative analysis are inadequate for explaining an outcome of this type. This outcome—the historical emergence of a new mode of political practice—involved the exercise of creative human capacities; and creative action is

arguably impossible to predict using the tools of structuralist explanation. Even more difficult is to predict creative action that results in something that works and is picked up by others; and more difficult still is to predict the *content* of that creative action. The instruments provided by structuralist analysis are simply too blunt for the job. Whether they mean to or not, structuralist theories tend to proceed as if change in political practice follows in some kind of natural way from big and slow-moving historical transformations. But creative action entails responding in unprecedented ways to situations that have not prompted similar responses from others—that is, it involves acting in ways that contextual conditions do not automatically imply. Further, structuralist theories tend to focus attention away from the actions of individuals or small groups and to neglect the cultural elements of a social context that may condition individual and small-group action—two things that arguably should be at the center of any explanation of creative action. And structuralist theories of social movements suffer from similar problems. While political opportunity theories, for example, are good at predicting when political actors will mobilize and who they will target when they do, they do not provide many tools for explaining the development of *new* political practices, for understanding where these new practices come from, or for explaining what forms these will take (given the range of possible practices that might be devised in response to any given set of social, economic, political, and cultural realities). Thus, explaining the outcome at hand requires somewhat different tools.

In the pages that follow, I will outline an approach to explaining change in political practice that responds to these concerns and can be used to account for the rise of populist mobilization in Peru. While still informed by the substantive contributions of structuralist theories, this approach will foreground processes of political innovation by organized political actors as they confront and move through concrete yet dynamically unfolding problem situations, making it possible to explain why populist mobilization emerged in Peru in 1931 *despite* the seeming unripeness of conditions. Ultimately, I will make the case that this outcome occurred because organized outsider political actors—constituted as such and contingently empowered by the changing dynamics of the political field—had the socially and experientially conditioned understanding, vision, and capacities to recognize the limitations of routine political practice and to modify, transpose, invent, and recombine practices in a way that took advantage of new opportunities afforded by the changing social and political context of action. But before elaborating my argument further, it is first necessary to spell out the historical and theoretical questions in more detail.

The Rise of Populist Mobilization in Peru

To specify the historical questions that this book seeks to answer—and to establish the significance of these to both Peruvian and Latin American history—I must say a bit more about the case and then situate it in the flow of Peruvian political history. On October 11, 1931, Peruvian citizens went to the polls to vote in their county's first legitimate presidential election in over a decade. For eleven years they had suffered under the often dictatorial rule of Augusto B. Leguía, a member of the political elite gone rogue, whose accomplishments in modernizing Peru's economy and infrastructure were rivaled only by his successes at repressing any and all political opponents. When Leguía was finally overthrown in August 1930, it appeared as though a new day might be dawning for the Peruvian people. After an eight-month transitional period of provisional military rule, elections were declared and a new set of laws issued that were designed to expand suffrage and curb electoral corruption. The democratic contest that followed was unlike anything that had been seen before in the country's 110-year history as an independent republic.

Over the course of six months, candidates and their supporters confronted one another in the streets and in the press. They did so not only in the capital city of Lima, but in the far-flung provinces of the north and the south, along the Pacific coast, and in the Andean highlands. In this time of profound uncertainty, some candidates began campaigning weeks before elections were officially declared; and political organizations and clubs continued to form, dissolve, and reconfigure themselves right up until the bitter end. As the candidates and their parties campaigned, political loyalties, alliances, and oppositions were in a state of near-constant flux. Some powerful actors even attempted to outflank the electoral process altogether. On the right, various social and political elites tried to orchestrate backroom deals to shut down the whole affair; and on the left, having been excluded from participation, the Communists supported strikes and criticized the election as a bourgeois sham.

But the initiatives of both the traditional right and the Communist left were overshadowed, and ultimately rendered moot, by the exploits of two quite different—yet equally unconventional—contenders. Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre was an intellectual born into a downwardly mobile aristocratic family. In keeping with this social background, he was noticeably light-skinned and had European features. Having risen through the ranks of the student and labor movements, he was now a prominent figure of the radical left. Luis M. Sánchez Cerro, the son of a middle-class notary, was dark-skinned with indigenous features. An army officer who had begun his service as a lowly

private, he was a career military man with right-wing nationalist sentiments (and right-wing political allies to accompany these).

But while differing in their social origins, institutional positions, and ideological orientations, both of these unlikely presidential aspirants shared in the fact that they came from outside the social and political mainstream. Both hailed from peripheral north-coast provinces, rather than from metropolitan Lima, and neither had kinship ties to dominant social or political elites. Despite such clear outsider status, however, by mid-1931 each had forced his way into the national spotlight, while cultivating powerful movements of loyal supporters. Highly charismatic and sitting at the helms of their own recently formed personalistic parties, these two figures quickly came to dominate the political contest. Each tried to upstage the other in his appeals to newly enfranchised voters and in painting himself as the best alternative to the political exclusions and corruptions of the past. Along the way, the two converged in developing a new mode of political practice that would soon become commonplace in Peru and throughout Latin America.[6]

The two candidates and their parties fixed their crosshairs on more or less the same groups of potential supporters. In the cities and towns, and especially in Lima, they competed for the loyalties of skilled and unskilled laborers, small merchants, street vendors, middle-class professionals, white-collar workers, and students—the ranks of all of which had swelled notably in the 1920s under Leguía. In the countryside, the politicians courted both small landholders and newly proletarianized plantation workers, while proclaiming their sympathies for the plight of the highland indigenous population. Most of the targeted groups had previously been the victims of social stigma and either de jure or de facto political exclusion. Regarded as politically irrelevant, most had never before been seriously courted by national-level politicians. In a dramatic reversal of this trend—a reversal that was as strategically

6. Emphasizing the similarities between the two candidates will be controversial in some circles. Haya de la Torre's agenda was more radical, whereas Sánchez Cerro was interested in maintaining the status quo by restoring the national social and political order that had been upended by Leguía. Of the two, Haya is the one most commonly recognized as a "populist." Although he changed his political positions in idiosyncratic ways later in life, he emerged from the left and initially advanced a genuinely transformative agenda meant to break the old oligarchy's stranglehold on political influence. Sánchez Cerro is typically denied the "populist" label, because he lacked a thoroughgoing commitment to social change. Indeed, some historians prefer to call him a fascist (Dobyns and Doughty 1976, 231; Molinari Morales 2006). Needless to say, the disagreement over how these candidates are categorized hinges on definitions and points of emphasis. As this book is focused on the issue of political *practice*, the emphasis on similarity is entirely appropriate. Indeed, it demonstrates the utility of moving beyond stalemated debates about what does and does not count as "populism" (see Jansen 2011).

savvy as it was historic—both Haya de la Torre and Sánchez Cerro validated the identities and concerns of these groups, and made the task of harnessing their political potential a centerpiece of their campaign strategies.

They did so, each knowing that the other was trying to do the same, by devising novel political practices and rhetorical claims that were tailor-made to capture the loyalties of the targeted groups. Each offered his own unique narrative of recent events and definition of the current social and political situation; each outlined his own understanding of the country's social problems; and each presented a particular reading of the nation's past and vision for its future. Their rhetorical claims aligned in valorizing the ordinary, often stigmatized and marginalized, members of Peruvian society as forming the true heart of the nation, and in identifying as the source of these citizens' (and thus the nation's) troubles the continuing political power of an antinational and antipopular oligarchical elite. Of course, since both candidates were making such claims, each strove to identify *himself* with the Peruvian people and his *opponent* with the oligarchy, such that a genuinely popular stance would imply identification with and support for his own political party (and opposition to that of his opponent).

These rhetorical claims animated and were infused into political mobilization projects that grew ever more contentious as the pressure cooker of electoral competition drove each candidate to experiment with increasingly audacious strategies and tactics. Most conspicuously, the candidates and their parties organized unprecedentedly large rallies and marches, often prompting violent responses from opponents and onlookers. While the largest public events took place in Lima, smaller versions were staged in cities and towns throughout the country. These were often held in conjunction with visits by the candidates, as both Haya de la Torre and Sánchez Cerro undertook much more extensive campaigns to the provinces than had ever before been ventured. The candidates' national tours, and the public events that accompanied them, were facilitated by extensive networks of party-affiliated popular organizations. Such organizations—localized political committees, cells, and clubs at the city, neighborhood, and workplace levels—played a critical role in the campaigns by facilitating coordinated participation in party activities (both extraordinary and mundane). Active participation in organizations of this kind politicized ordinary Peruvians, encouraged them to develop new political identities and loyalties, and incorporated them into new structures of social and political solidarity.

In sum, Haya de la Torre and Sánchez Cerro—with the aid of their personalistic parties and party leadership—mobilized previously marginalized social groups into publicly visible political action, while motivating these

political efforts with an anti-elite, nationalist rhetoric that valorized ordinary people. That is, they developed a mode of political practice that I call populist mobilization.

These actions might not appear particularly remarkable from the perspective of the present day. Indeed, with the headline-grabbing exploits of contemporary figures like Venezuela's Hugo Chávez and Bolivia's Evo Morales still fresh in recent memory, they might seem like just another example of what we have come to expect from Latin American politicians. That is to say, it is easy to take populist mobilization for granted as intrinsic to the region's political culture if we make the mistake of reading history backwards, according to contemporary understandings of political possibility. But contrary to present-day stereotypes, populist mobilization was far from routine in Latin America—let alone in Peru—prior to the 1940s. Indeed, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was not even on the menu of strategic options. Other modes of political practice predominated. Latin American politics had historically been defined by the looming presence of the military in political life; by conflicts between *caudillo* strongmen competing for the spoils of office; and by oligarchical parties organized according to liberal-conservative, rural-urban, and regional rivalries. In the nineteenth century, elite politicians often leveraged their clientelistic networks to marshal private armies and seize the presidency by force. Later, with the rise of electoral politics, they colluded to limit democratic participation, rigged elections, and arranged backroom deals to control electoral outcomes. With a few notable exceptions, bottom-up mobilizations were geographically limited and quickly suppressed. That is, while most countries in the region achieved independence from Spain in the 1820s, their political leaders did not rely on populist mobilization to secure or maintain legitimacy or power.

Peru's 1931 election was thus a critically important moment in the history of Latin American political practice. It produced the region's first example of sustained, national-level, election-oriented populist mobilization. Prior to this moment, never had a candidate for national office so completely flouted traditional channels of political power and so thoroughly staked his political aspirations on the mobilization of support from non-elite segments of the population. In this way, the new practices introduced by Haya de la Torre and Sánchez Cerro represented a radical departure from traditional styles of political action. Explaining this shift in practice is the principal aim of this book.

The events of the 1931 election would change the face of Peruvian politics for generations to come. After this moment, populist mobilization had a track record, as politicians and the general public alike had witnessed it firsthand. More important, they had seen its power to overwhelm the traditional

strategies of the political elite. Although populist mobilization was by no means endemic in Peru after the 1931 election—it was certainly not the case that it was practiced continuously thereafter or that it appealed as a strategy to all political actors—the introduction of this mode of practice shifted the terrain of political possibility. Populist mobilization was now a potential go-to strategy; and for all political actors, regardless of whether or not they favored the approach, it became something that they had to anticipate might be used against them. The election was thus a critical turning point in Peru's trajectory of political development. But it was a particular kind of turning point: it was a turning point in the general patterns of the sorts of things that political actors either tended themselves to do or had to anticipate that others might do. It was a turning point in the parameters of political possibility—of what practices were culturally available to political actors. Before this moment, populist mobilization was largely beyond the horizon of the politically "thinkable" (at least by anyone in a position to practice it); after this moment, it was available as a potential strategy. The development of populist mobilization over the course of this high-stakes election thus had profound long-term consequences for Peruvian social and political life.

It also had important consequences for the region as a whole. Once crystalized in the Peruvian context, the set of practices became available to other Latin American politicians—who were very much aware of how events had unfolded in this neighboring country. It would be overstretching to claim that Peru's 1931 election is the lynchpin that explains the rise of populist mobilization across Latin America in the 1940s and 1950s, let alone that accounts for its persistence into the present.[7] But it is quite reasonable to claim that the rise of populist mobilization in Peru played an important role in reshaping the political-cultural environment within which other regional political actors would find themselves operating—and that it would be considerably easier for these actors to draw parallels to the nearby Peruvian case than to other cases more geographically and temporally distant. The election at the center of this book is thus a critical case not only for explaining the historical emergence of populist mobilization in Peru, but also for shedding light on the changing landscape of Latin American politics in the twentieth century.

The primary historical question that this book seeks to answer is the following: Why and how did populist mobilization emerge in Peru in 1931? To answer this question, it will be necessary to confront a series of more concrete empirical puzzles. First, if traditional political routines were so entrenched in

7. Explaining the rise, spread, and persistence of populist mobilization throughout Latin America would require much more than this book is able to do.

early twentieth-century Peru, why and how did Haya de la Torre and Sánchez Cerro manage to break with these so dramatically at this particular historical juncture? Second, if something about this moment facilitated a break with political tradition, why did other political actors—of the right and the left—not also change up strategies at this time? Third, if Haya de la Torre and Sánchez Cerro differed so starkly in their social origins, institutional positions, and ideological orientations, why did they end up converging in the sorts of new political practices that they developed? Fourth, why—given what is in theory a wide range of potential options—did this new mode of political practice take on the particular characteristics that it did (i.e., those of what I call populist mobilization)? Fifth, given that this initial practice of populist mobilization was experimental—and vehemently opposed by some powerful actors—why did it ultimately "stick," in the sense of becoming an established go-to strategy for future generations of Peruvian politicians?

Practicing Politics, Changing Repertoires

These historical questions speak to a broader set of theoretical concerns in sociology, history, and political science having to do with political stability and change. Perhaps the most common point of focus for the study of political stability and change is to look at stability and change in political structures. This was a central concern in the political writings of both Karl Marx ([1852] 1969; [1871] 1968) and Max Weber ([1922] 1978). Much of the scholarship on revolutions and social movements is clearly in this vein; but we can also see this emphasis in work on state formation and consolidation, on regime types and transitions, and on the reproduction and transformation of political institutions.[8] Another focus is on the question of stability and change in political identity. The vast literature on party identification and voter realignments would fall under this heading, as would studies of nationalism, the politicization of ethnicity, and other related topics.[9]

8. On revolutions, see Goodwin 2001, Skocpol 1979, Wickham-Crowley 1992. On social movements, see Fligstein and McAdam 2011, McAdam 1982, Tilly 1978. On state formation, see P. Anderson 1974, Gorski 2003, Tilly 1975. On regime types and transitions, see Huntington 1991, Linz and Stepan 1978, O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986. On political institutional resilience, see Huntington [1968] 1996, Michels [1915] 1999, Mills 1956. On political institutional change, see Clemens 1997, Mahoney 2001, Mahoney and Thelen 2010.

9. On party identification and voter realignments, see Campbell et al. 1960, Manza and Brooks 1999, Manza, Hout, and Brooks 1995. On nationalism, see B. Anderson 1991, Brubaker 1996, Gellner 1983. On the politicization of ethnicity, see R. Jenkins 1997, Laitin 1985, Yashar 2005.

But while all of these issues are important and will bear on the argument here in various ways, they are not my primary interest. Rather, this book is concerned first and foremost with explaining changes in how politics is practiced. Over the past couple of decades, political sociologists have focused increasingly on the domain of practice. This is evident in work on political spectacle and performance (Alexander, Giesen, and Mast 2006; Berezin 1997; Tilly 2008), on political violence (Auyero 2007; Brubaker and Laitin 1998; Tilly 2003), on political organizing (Clemens 1997; Morris 1984; Polletta 2002), and on social movement strategies and tactics (Bloom 2015; Ganz 2009; Tarrow 1998; Zald 2000), among other topics.

The issue of political action, or practice, would not be of interest if either one of two opposed statements were true. It would not be interesting if political action were completely predictable—if political action followed automatically from a political actor's social position, material interests, social identity, or ideological orientation. But political action is not epiphenomenal in this way. If choices in modes of political action were determined by the actor's social position or related material interests—if, for example, all working-class movements favored the same political strategies—we would not see the range of political practices that we do, nor the variability in terms of their application. If all political action followed simply from social identity, the same: we would see all women's movements favoring the same practices and all ethnonational separatist movements acting in the same way. If all political actions were simply the result of ideological orientation, we would not see the infighting that we do within ideologically aligned groups over issues of strategy. As has been argued by others, and as this book will demonstrate, political practice simply cannot be read off of social position, interests, identity, or ideology.[10] It is at least relatively autonomous from these things, and thus presents itself as a social scientific problem.

At the same time, however, political practice is not a free-for-all, with everyone reinventing the wheel at every turn. If this were the case—if political action were completely random, or at least unconstrained—then what any given political episode looked like would be as unsurprising as any other. Political practice, while in principle still worth accounting for, would be impossible to explain in any kind of rigorous way. But political practice is not a free-for-all; instead, it tends to be quite patterned, fairly limited in range, and relatively stable at any given time and place. If political practice is neither

10. All of the work on political practice cited above usefully problematizes political action in this way.

completely indeterminate nor deterministically epiphenomenal of social conditions, then the question of its stability and change over time warrants investigation in its own right.

What are the sources of stability in political practice, if they are not to be found in prepolitical social realities? In more settled contexts, robust political institutions tend to produce relatively stable rules of the game according to which power is exercised, interests are balanced, and political functions are performed, producing relative stability in practice. At the same time—and critically in cases like Peru in 1931, characterized by social disruption and institutional instability—there is a *cultural* stability to political practice, deriving from shared histories of political experience, notions of acceptable and unacceptable ways of acting, and horizons of what is politically "thinkable." More often than not, politicians do what they themselves or others had done previously, without much deviation, reproducing existing political routines out of habit. Of course, they improvise here and there, because some improvisation is always necessary when adapting available practices to contexts that are never entirely identical in their specifics to previous ones. But in general, the array of political practices is relatively limited, stable, and reproduced over time. All of this means that political practice—whether conventional or contentious—tends to involve only minor improvisation on a relatively limited set of practices that politicians normally enact. In this way, it is constrained as much by culture as it is by institutions.

Political sociology describes this quality of political practice through the metaphor of repertoires (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; Tarrow 1998; Tilly 2008). The repertoire concept has been central to contentious politics research for more than twenty years, but it is most closely associated with the work of sociologist Charles Tilly—who introduced the term in a 1976 article and first made it the subject of sustained treatment in his 1986 book, *The Contentious French*. For Tilly (2006, 34), the concept was meant to "capture some of the recurrent, historically embedded character of contentious politics." It did this by highlighting the existence of scripts for the tactics and practices used in collective claims making, and by pointing out that most political action is some sort of limited improvisation on these scripts (ibid., 34–35). That is, protesting social actors draw on historically and culturally limited repertoires, or "tool kits" (Swidler 1986), of contentious practice when enacting their public claims making. Because they tend to be reproduced with minimal modification, such repertoires come to stabilize the meanings of those practices through which politically opposed groups routinely interact, and thus to circumscribe what is strategically thinkable. In this way, they play a key role in constituting the political culture of a given time and place, lending a measure of stability to political practice.

But even if they are stable most of the time, repertoires can change. Sometimes they change gradually; but in rare moments, the world of political practice is shaken by something dramatically new being done. When this happens—especially if the new practice produces unanticipated success—the game changes in the long run, altering the course of political practice as the repertoire changes. Precisely because political action tends to draw on routine practices in the existing repertoire, moments in which practices deviate from the regular pattern—that is, moments of novelty—become particularly interesting, even puzzling. If political practice is patterned, and if these patterns are generally stable, then the question of what produces *change* becomes important.

This is thus a book about change in political repertoires. The central theoretical question that the book seeks to address is this: If repertoires of political practice are generally stable and reproduced over time, under what conditions and by what processes do they change? Answering this question requires attending to three interrelated subquestions. First, under what conditions, and by what processes, do political actors break from their old habits to develop new practices? Second, what shapes the characteristics of the new practices that they develop? And third, what does it take for these practices to get assimilated into—and thus change—the broader political repertoire?

Given this understanding, we can now recast the historical question in more appropriate theoretical language: what follows is best understood as a sociological study of a historically important shift in the Peruvian political repertoire. Explaining this shift is the principal aim of this book.

Existing Approaches to Repertoire Change

Political repertoires have been the focus of a growing body of culturally inflected scholarship within the social movements literature. A good deal of research has been devoted to mapping the strategic terrain by describing the characteristics of existing repertoires. Some of this work has analyzed the tactical options and practical resources that have been culturally available to specific social movements at particular historical moments (Ennis 1987). Operating with a longer time horizon, other studies have traced the historical trajectories of particular repertoires in specific countries (Steinberg 1995; Traugott 1995). Still others have examined repertoires over time through the lens of their instantiation in broader waves of contentious political activity

(Beissinger 2002; Tarrow 1989, 1995; White 1995). Finally, some have taken a more comparative approach in attempting to describe general historical patterns in repertoires across both time and space (Roehner and Syme 2002). Overall, such scholarship has been valuable, establishing as a phenomenon worth explaining the existence of historically contingent yet relatively stable assemblages of political practices. It shows how political action is constrained and enabled by repertoires, thus lending stability to political practice writ large. But this work has generally focused more on charting the contours of the phenomenon than on explaining *change* in repertoires over time.

Another line of scholarship has attended to the question of why, given a relatively stable repertoire of possibilities, social movement actors choose to implement certain practices, strategies, or tactics rather than others. Some of this work has attempted to explain strategic choices by focusing on factors *internal* to the movements in question. Such factors include a group's culture (Polletta 2002; Wickham-Crowley 1992), its organizational collective identities (Clemens 1997), its ideological commitments (Snow and Benford 1992), its members' "tastes in tactics" (Jasper 1997, 229–50), and the qualities of its leadership (Ganz 2000, 2009). Other work on strategy selection has focused on factors *external* to movements. Such work has argued that movements' understandings of how their strategies will be perceived in a given sociopolitical environment play a role in shaping their activities (Brumley 2010), that the institutional characteristics of the *targets* of protest sometimes drive movements' tactical choices (Walker, Martin, and McCarthy 2008), and that movements' practical options are shaped by the dynamics of the strategic situations in which they find themselves (Jasper 2004). All of this work has attended more closely than the repertoire-mapping studies just described to the decision making of political actors. But because it has focused largely on contemporary social movements operating in contexts of relatively robust repertoire stability, it likewise fails to shed much light on the more historical question of repertoire change.

In the end, Tilly's own historical studies of the development of modern protest repertoires in France and Great Britain provide the most useful jumping-off point for addressing the question at hand (see, e.g., Tilly 1986, 1995, 2008). Tilly's general argument is elaborated most fully in his synoptic 2006 book, *Regimes and Repertoires*. Here, as elsewhere, he focuses on how small changes at the margins of existing repertoires can eventually culminate in their slow transformation over the course of decades. His substantive argument, in summary, is that protest repertoires tend to change in dialogue with changes in the political opportunity structure (see Tilly 1986, 1995). That is, Tilly's explanation for repertoire change foregrounds the importance of

changing macro-historical conditions—and especially *political* conditions (in the cases of France and Great Britain, those associated with the development of the modern state)—as they slowly reshape the terrain of contention.

While Tilly's work has much to offer and provides a solid starting point, it is not entirely satisfactory for explaining repertoire change in the Peruvian case. In this regard, it suffers from at least three limitations. The first two have to do with the nature of the outcome—that is, that the type of repertoire change that Tilly studied differed from that found in the Peruvian case. The third limitation concerns how the mode of repertoire change that Tilly studied influenced the sorts of theoretical conclusions that tend to be extrapolated from his work. I will elaborate on each of these points in turn.

First, there is the issue of the *pace* of repertoire change. Tilly chose to focus on cases in which political repertoires changed gradually, over the course of many decades. But while it is indeed true that repertoires often change quite slowly, they sometimes change much more quickly, through dramatic episodes of radical innovation (see Walder 2009). Tilly (2008, 12) granted as much when he noted that, "to be sure, radical innovations sometimes occur suddenly and spread rapidly," offering the explanation that "rapid changes in political contexts offer more stimuli to radical, rapid innovation in performances." This was precisely what happened in Peru in 1931, when the rapid elaboration of a new mode of political practice changed the political repertoire in a very short period of time. But while recognizing the distinction between gradual and rapid repertoire change, Tilly (ibid.) felt that the former was more important to understand, since "most of the time political contexts change incrementally . . . [and] as a result, so do performances." This may or may not be the case. Regardless, however, one would ideally like to be able to explain both.

Second, there is the issue of the *focal breadth* of the process of repertoire change. Tilly studied cases in which the repertoire changed as many social and political collective actors—across a broad ecology of similar actors, located in different places, operating at least somewhat independently of one another—began modifying their practices in similar ways over roughly the same period of time. We might say that the focal breadth of change in such cases is wide, or diffuse. But while repertoire change—especially gradual change—often takes place in this sort of diffuse way, with actors responding independently to similar situations and adjusting their actions over time, it can also emerge out of a much more narrow, or centralized, point of origin. Especially in cases of rapid change, the innovative actions of a smaller number of prominent social or political actors—influential first movers—can have a widespread impact, rippling out to transform the broader repertoire. While Tilly's work concerns

diffuse change, the Peruvian case is a clear example of centralized change. Again, this incompatibility between Tilly's work and the Peruvian case does not amount to a criticism of that work per se; but it highlights a gap in its applicability to the full range of cases of repertoire change. And, arguably, an understanding of the dynamics of centralized repertoire change only stands to enhance our understanding of the dynamics of diffuse change.

The third limitation of Tilly's approach, for present purposes, derives from the first two. A focus on gradual and diffuse repertoire change predisposes the researcher to search for slow-moving and macro-level explanations, which inevitably shifts the lens away from localized and eventful interactions and processes to broader structural conditions. This may be perfectly appropriate for the study of gradual and diffuse change, both because of the particular contours of the phenomenon and as a practical response to the demands of data collection. But it can lead the reader of such studies (if not the researcher him- or herself) to forget that macro-structural conditions do not themselves produce repertoire change—*people* do, as they act in specific, structurally constrained contexts. The result can be an overestimation of the adequacy of structuralist theories of repertoire change and a lack of tools for the study of rapid and centralized instances of the phenomenon. While it is still important to attend to the structural context when explaining rapid and centralized repertoire change, it is also necessary to attend to the interactional and iterative social processes by which political actors come to transcend their established routines to elaborate new lines of practice as contextualized situations unfold. While it is clear from Tilly's later work that he appreciated the importance of this task, his work on repertoires provides few tools for undertaking it.[11] An adequate approach to repertoire change must address all three of these limitations before it can build on Tilly's important contributions to historical and political sociology.

Toward a Sociology of Situated Political Innovation

Based on the discussion thus far, an approach to repertoire change that will be capable of explaining the Peruvian case must be tailored to focus on rapid change that originates from a centralized set of political actors, and it must provide tools for identifying the processes producing regular patterns of action at this more localized level. At the same time, given the nature of the case, it must be prepared to accommodate the unpredictability of unsettled times in poorly institutionalized contexts—and the fact that this means that

11. See, e.g., McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; and cf. Gross 2010.

social rules, roles, collective actors, and organizations may be in a state of flux. What, then, is the best way to proceed? The discussion above has already suggested the inadequacy of approaches implying either a strong structuralism or a radical notion of contingency, but the limitations of these warrant further elaboration here.

Especially in the field of comparative politics—but also in what sociologists Julia Adams, Elisabeth Clemens, and Ann Orloff (2005) have referred to as "second wave" historical sociology—political action has tended to be approached with a form of macro-analytic social or political structuralism. There are a few problems with this approach, at least when it comes to explaining repertoire change. The first is that it tends to treat political practice as epiphenomenal of deeper structures. But as noted above, political practice is at least relatively autonomous from these, and indeed can itself have recursive consequences for social conditions—in that it can result in the reconfiguration of social relationships, solidarities, and cleavages. Structuralist approaches thus fail to appreciate that political actors themselves can play important roles in constituting their own bases of support; and this is particularly important to bear in mind when studying populist mobilization. A second problem follows from the first. As suggested above, repertoire change is ultimately the result of human action, not abstract structural conditions. This means that any explanation pitched solely at the macro-analytic level misses out on an important part of the action driving the process, which takes place at the micro- and meso-analytic levels. Finally, whether implicitly or explicitly, structuralist approaches advance a quasi-deterministic mode of explanation that is entirely inappropriate to the subject of repertoire change. If the notion of political repertoires is premised on the fact that political actors tend to act in fairly routine ways, then for a repertoire to change, some actors must act in ways that their predecessors had not; and, more critically, they must act in ways that their contemporaries—confronted with the same sociopolitical conditions—are not acting. That is, those who drive repertoire change are by definition acting audaciously and creatively; and audacity and creativity cannot be predicted deterministically. At the very least, the centrality of creative action to the outcome in question means that an adequate explanation must go a step beyond the identification of necessary or sufficient structural conditions—traditionally the bread and butter of comparative-historical research (see Cyr and Mahoney 2012). For these reasons and others, traditional structuralist approaches are inappropriate to explaining change in political repertoires.

Critiques of structuralism are nothing new in political and comparative-historical sociology. But some of what has come in the wake of these critiques

is equally unsatisfying (albeit for different reasons). For many, the alternative to structuralism has been to embrace a sort of radical contingency. Indeed, contingency has become something of a buzzword for "third wave" historical sociology and the historical turn in the human sciences more generally. As a polemical response to structuralism, this has no doubt been useful; but the utility has diminishing returns. Strong contingency arguments continue to operate according to terms established by structuralist theories, which posit contingency as the negation of structural determination: that is, what cannot be explained by structure is idiosyncratic, unpatterned, unexplainable. Contingency is structural determinism's residual category. But this category is much too expansive, ignoring various other ways in which social life is patterned at the meso and micro levels. The alternative to arguing that an outcome is not wholly determined by macro-structural conditions is not to argue that it is the unpredictable result of radical contingency.

It is also possible to explore other sources of the patterned nature of social action, interaction, and relationships. Given that the mode of repertoire change of interest here is rapid, with its origins in a relatively well-circumscribed social space, it is necessary to develop a set of analytical tools for looking inside structurally conditioned yet eventful political contexts, and explaining how people respond to and interact in the context of micro-level situations as these unfold over time. This requires not only attending to structural conditions, but also, as much as possible, understanding the situation from the perspectives of the actors involved—located as they are in a particular place and time, with a limited spatial and temporal horizon of knowledge and experience. That is, explaining the rise of a new mode of political practice requires stepping into the shoes of conscious and creative historical subjects for whom it *did not yet exist* in the political culture. Because repertoire change involves the introduction of novelty, the actions taking place at the micro level that are of most interest for the outcome in question are expressions of profound creativity. Accordingly, it is necessary to go beyond just attending to institutional rules and social routines—because creative political action breaks these—to rely instead on a theoretical perspective that attends to the often neglected human capacity for creativity.

This book seeks to demonstrate that the key to explaining repertoire change is to understand it as a product of contextually situated innovation by collective political actors. Change in a repertoire means that something has been added to the preexisting set of practical possibilities.[12] That is, political

12. This is analogous to the introduction of a new product (to take an example from the economic domain), a new technology (to take an example from the technological domain), a new theory (to take an example from the intellectual domain), or a new musical form (to take an example from the cultural domain).

repertoire change entails innovation, which involves the exercise of human creative capacities to transcend the stability of routine expectations and practice. It is increasingly common in cultural, economic, and organizational sociology to treat innovation as a process of recombination—that is, of the fragmentary transposition, adaptation, and resuturing of existing practical models into something new (Berk and Galvan 2009; Clemens 1997; Faulkner and Becker 2009; Stark 1996; Swidler 2001). *Political* innovation similarly involves the recombination and reshaping of practices from *here* and *there*, from *now* and *then*, into something novel that makes sense for and is useful in the context at hand. But creating something that is successful in this way is easier said than done. Recombinatory possibilities are often limited by experience and constrained by convention; and it is remarkably challenging to stitch together new packages of practices that are both internally coherent and appropriate to given situations—especially when those situations are hard to read, the future is uncertain, and the practices to be newly enacted are untested. Explaining political innovation requires understanding where the innovative impulse comes from, what leads to the translation of that impulse into effective action, and why that action takes the form that it does. Given these powerful constraints, where can explanations of political innovation—and thus ultimately of repertoire change—find traction? The most promising place is in a systematic approach to practice that foregrounds the lived experiences of social actors who are capable of responding creatively to the unpredictable situations in which they find themselves.

Such an approach is provided by the pragmatist theories of social action originally formulated by Charles Sanders Peirce ([1878] 1992), William James (1975), John Dewey (1922, 1925), and George Herbert Mead (1932, 1934), and recently revived in American sociology by Hans Joas, Neil Gross, and others.[13] This perspective departs from the action theories implicit in much political sociology by rejecting means-ends assumptions as teleological (Whitford 2002) and by theorizing explicitly the sources of creative social action (Joas 1996). Rather than assuming that social actors rationally assign means to the achievement of distinct, preformulated ends, pragmatist theories view

13. See Gross 2008, 2009; Joas 1985, 1993, and 1996. Good overviews of classical American pragmatism are available in Gross 2007, Scheffler 1974, and Shook and Margolis 2006. More recent works, representative of the new "pragmatist turn" in American sociology, include Bargheer 2011; Biernacki 2005; Dalton 2004; Emirbayer and Goldberg 2005; Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Emirbayer and Schneiderhan 2013; Frye 2012; Mische 2009; Schneiderhan 2011; Silver 2011; Tavory and Timmermans 2014; and Whitford 2002.

humans as developmentally evolving problem solvers who, encountering "practical problems that arise in the course of life" (Gross 2009, 366), are embedded in unfolding situational contexts in which "ends and means develop coterminously" (Emirbayer and Mische 1998, 967–68). Action unfolds in a continuous stream in which "ends" and "means" are constantly shifting in relation to one another; in which "ends" are never *ultimate* ends, but *anticipated* final results (what Dewey [1922, 225–27] called "ends-in-view"); in which anticipated "ends" can thus be understood as "means"; and in which "means" themselves become experienced as short-term "ends" (see Bargheer 2011, 13–14). This makes it necessary "to reconceptualize human agency as a temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its historical aspect), but also oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment)" (Emirbayer and Mische 1998, 963). The possibility of *creative* social action emerges through this process of experimentation and developmental social learning, in response to the contingent formation of subjectively understood problem situations (Gross 2009, 366; Joas 1996; Schneiderhan 2011, 594–96; see also Dalton 2004) because—although habitual action may be the norm—there is always "the possibility, greater in some circumstances than others, that a novel way of responding to a problem could emerge for any of the actors involved" (Gross 2009, 369).[14] Only when this tenuous process produces success does the result have the potential to become routinized and recognized after the fact as an instance of political innovation (see Dalton 2004).

Accordingly, *situated political innovation* can be understood as a joint product of the careful reading by social actors of historical conditions and of the practical problem situations that these constitute; of the informed assessment of the expectations and strategies of others; of a stock of experience and the ability to recognize practical alternatives; of anticipating the likely outcomes of possible lines of action; of intelligent and savvy experimentation; and of reassessment, self-correction, and redirection—in short, of contextualized learning through trial and error, with only an incomplete comprehension of the immediate reality and a hazily uncertain (if hopeful) view of the future.

14. The sociological question, with regard to innovation, is thus not, *who has exceptional levels of innate creativity, and who lacks it?*—as if there were dramatic inequalities in the distribution of this human capacity—but rather, *what triggers creative responses to particular situations?* (given that these are significantly less common than are habitual responses).

Because of the tendency of pragmatist approaches to focus at the individual level, a modest accommodation is required for it to be a useful tool for understanding political processes. In studying the political sphere, it is necessary to attend not only to *individual* actors responding to situations and devising courses of action, but also to *collective* actors (more or less organized)—as it is ultimately these collective actors that develop and enact lines of political action. In attending to collective actors, it is important not to take them for granted as naturally given or to presume internal consistency across their constituent elements (as their members may not all share the same experiences, agendas, habits, and responses). Collective actors are historically and situationally constituted, in ways that could have been otherwise. How they are constituted matters for how they will respond to situations and formulate lines of action; and, ultimately, for whether their actions will be innovative. It is thus necessary to attend to how parties, movements, and other collective actors form, and how their members relate to one another. What stocks of experiences and routines do individual members bring to the collectivity? What is the relative weight of these individuals (and thus of the experiences, dispositions, and capabilities that they bring to the table) vis-à-vis one another? What is the authority structure within the group? How do members share information and their assessments of the situation with one another? How are their strategic decisions—which will ultimately guide their lines of action—made? What is the group's capacity to act? These questions all have their analogues at the individual (even cognitive) level, but become especially important at the collective level. These considerations add a layer of complexity to the analysis, but are not incompatible with pragmatist principles.

In translating pragmatist approaches to the political sphere, it is also important not to neglect the broader context in which political action is situated. Pragmatist approaches emphasize that the problem-solving activities that hold the possibility for creative responses (whether by individuals or collectivities) always play out within a circumscribed context of action. This context is partially constituted by broader patterns of social structural conditions, but also by the field of other social agents interacting over time against the backdrop of these conditions. This means that, while not an automatic or easily predictable product of structural conditions, neither is human creativity somehow independent of these. Rather, it is situationally "anchored" (Joas 1996, 132–33). Political innovation, then—understood as the contingent product of creative recombination through temporally unfolding and problem oriented social interaction—is always *situated* in a particular context of action. This point is critical for the analysis to follow; but unfortunately,

pragmatist approaches are often less than satisfying when it comes to specifying how elements of the broader, historically rooted setting impinge on the context of action (in much the same way that macro-structuralist theories often leave the micro level loose and implicit).

In studying repertoire change that originates in the actions of a relatively circumscribed set of collective political actors, one element of the context of action to which it is particularly important to attend is the broader set of relations among these actors—that is, the structure and dynamics of the political field. The context of a political situation is one in which multiple collective actors are oriented toward one another, are aware of how others are acting, and elaborate their own lines of action in response to one another. These actors, competing for similar spoils, confront the same rules of the game. And the political rules—whether formal or informal, explicit or tacit—govern how contention will play out and delimit who can and cannot legitimately act in the field. These rules are not imposed from the outside, but are rather endogenous to the field (whether established by dominant actors or agreed on by all). In unsettled times, this field is not a static thing. The relative positions of actors vis-à-vis one another can change, new actors can come into being, and old actors can be reconfigured or dis-integrate. Thus, the dynamics of the field can play a key role in the constitution of collective political actors, as well as in shaping their actions. At the same time, as the field and its actors can change, so too can the rules. If the goal is to explain the innovative actions of one or more actors within such a field, it is necessary to explain the changes in the structure and dynamics of the field that impacted the actors doing the innovating. All of this might be thought of as the *political* context of action.

At the same time, all of the political actors vying for position in a field are simultaneously confronting and moving through the same society, with its economic conditions, configuration of social relations, and technological and infrastructural endowments. It should be clear from the foregoing discussion that these conditions cannot be relied on to predict political action on their own. At the same time, however, any approach to political action that stops at the level of the individual, collectivity, or political field, and fails to take into account these social conditions, is similarly inadequate. It is necessary to consider how social conditions such as these can enable particular modes of practice, increase their likelihood of success, and thus afford opportunities to astute political actors. At the same time, as actors orient to the context of action, these social realities are as much a part of what they must attend to as the political realities just discussed. This might be thought of as the *social* context of action.

Finally, the development of a novel mode of political practice through situated political innovation does not in itself amount to repertoire change.

The new practice could fall flat, fail to produce noticeable success in the situation, or for other reasons not be taken up by others. If this were to happen, the novel practice would be ephemeral (as so many are) and the repertoire would persist unchanged. For a political repertoire to change over the long run, the new practice must become routinized—it must be used successfully by others in a range of situations until it itself becomes a part of political actors' stocks of experience and habit. For this to happen, the practice must resonate with audiences at the time of its use. This means that it must be appropriate to the social and political context of action and produce some measure of success for the group practicing it. At the same time, the usefulness of the practice must be recognized by other political actors in the field—both contemporary and future—in such a way that its future use becomes something to be considered or anticipated. Finally, for a new practice to become routinized, others must repeat it to the point that the possibility of its use becomes obvious. Characteristics of the social and political context of action figure centrally in whether these things transpire in the wake of innovation; and it is only when this happens that political repertoires are transformed.

Thus, to explain historical change in political repertoires, it is necessary to attend to the nature of the social and political conditions shaping a given context of action and affording possibilities for political innovation; the situational construction of the relevant collective political actors within a changing political field; the formation of the problem situations that these actors confront; the tipping of these actors' practical responses from routine action into political innovation; and the solidification of the new political practice as a "sticky" innovation that is taken up by others.[15] Specified in this way, a pragmatist approach to repertoire change encourages the systematic examination of how, in rare moments, creative political actors translate existing conditions into new forms of political action. Viewing repertoire change as a result of situated political innovation thus remedies some of the limitations of Tilly's approach and facilitates the historical explanation of the case at hand.

The remaining chapters unfold both chronologically and analytically. Chapter 1 circumscribes the outcome theoretically by sketching a definition of "populist mobilization" and clarifying how this differs from other modes of political practice. It then goes on to substantiate the outcome empirically by demonstrating that 1931 did indeed mark a moment of profound transformation in the Peruvian political repertoire. It does this through a survey of how

15. This formulation builds on Gross's (2009) lucid distillation of a "pragmatist theory of social mechanisms."

political practice changed in Peru between 1824, when the country achieved independence from Spain, and the second half of the twentieth century.

Chapter 2 establishes the social context of action by providing an overview of the significant social-structural transformations that Peru experienced in the first decades of the twentieth century. It then goes on to consider how the significance of these transformations should be understood. This exercise serves two important purposes for the book's overall argument. First, it demonstrates that the dominant structuralist theories of populism cannot adequately explain the rise of populist mobilization in Peru. Second, it suggests that social-structural conditions matter, but not in the way that traditional structuralists think they do. While changing social conditions did not make populist mobilization inevitable, they did make it newly possible by generating new grievances, making new groups of potential supporters both politically available and logistically reachable, and laying the social groundwork for political organization and mobilization. Just as important, they formed part of the context of action to which politicians of the day were subjectively oriented as they elaborated their lines of political action. The chapter argues, counterintuitively, that populist mobilization emerged in Peru in 1931 not because conditions were ripe (as structuralists might have it), but because changes in what were still unripe conditions (from the perspective of structuralist theories) spurred creative action by contingently empowered political outsiders who were attuned to the possibilities that they afforded.

Chapter 3, which focuses on the political context of action, explains how two collectivities of previously marginalized political actors, with personal and organizational characteristics that would dispose them to creative political action, crystalized and then came to find themselves in unlikely positions of viability on the national stage by May 1931. It argues that this was not an automatic byproduct of the changing social-structural conditions, but rather the result of contingent events and interactions unfolding within a dynamically changing field of political contention. Empirically, the chapter traces shifts in political relationships (both cooperative and antagonistic), as well as the formation and dissolution of collective political actors, across four significant periods of reconfiguration of the political field that took place between 1918 and 1931. The ultimate state of the political field, and the resulting composition and characteristics of the collective actors, set the stage for the forces of Haya de la Torre and Sánchez Cerro—as contingently empowered political outsiders—to take their first steps toward political innovation in May 1931.

Chapter 4 excavates the sources of political innovation in the first few months of electoral campaigning. At this critical moment, collective actors from across the political spectrum faced new challenges and opportunities,

but they responded to these differently. Some continued to act in routine ways, while others began to cobble together novel packages of practices. Through comparison of the initial actions of all four major political tendencies (the forces of Haya de la Torre and Sánchez Cerro, but also of the Communist left and the traditionalist right), this chapter explains this variation in response. The explanation centers around an understanding of how these actors' perceptions of the situation and of their practical strategic options were shaped by their previous, socially conditioned experiences, worldviews, and habits of thought—all of which were conditioned by their positions in the political field. Only the leadership of Sánchez Cerro's and Haya de la Torre's embryonic parties experienced the moment as constituting a critical problem situation that required a break with previous routines and a creative turn toward new forms of action. As these leaders began to experiment with new practices, it was their previous experiences—filtered through deliberative environments that facilitated radical departures from the norm—that led their practices to take on the characteristics of what would become a distinctly Latin American style of populist mobilization.

But political innovation is a process that unfolds over time. New practices have to be tested on the ground, in specific situations in which others are also acting. Accordingly, chapter 5 follows the development of populist practices over the course of the last few months of electoral campaigning, paying particular attention to how the political actors adapted their innovative practices to the context at hand, as well as to how these practices were refined over time as the actors assessed their own actions and responded to the actions of their competitors. It argues that the dynamic of competition between the two parties, and their assessments of their own strategic successes—that is, their experiential learning from themselves and from one another—led to a ratcheting up of the practices that they had been enacting since May. Focusing in particular on the parties' grassroots organizing efforts, their practices at mass rallies, and their political rhetoric, it shows how populist mobilization crystalized and gained in coherence between July and October 1931.

Chapter 6 explains how this new practice became routinized in Peru. Just because a political actor does something does not mean that this action will succeed or that it will become a go-to practice for others. For this new practice to enter into the repertoire in a stable way, it has to be repeated by others; and for this to happen, it has to resonate with popular audiences and be recognized as useful by other political actors. Populist mobilization, although new for the context, shared enough similarities with previous ideas and practices to avoid appearing entirely foreign to popular audiences; it produced recognizable successes for its practitioners; and it was subsequently picked

up by other Peruvian actors. Furthermore, the fact that politicians in other Latin American countries were aware of these events played an important—though by no means simplistically determinative—role in the development of populist strategies elsewhere in the region. This last substantive chapter demonstrates that this was the case and shows how it happened.

Finally, the concluding chapter summarizes the historical argument, presents a more schematic version of my pragmatist approach to repertoire change, and considers the implications of this approach for scholars of historical change and contentious politics. The chapter closes with a few brief remarks on how the theoretical considerations that have shaped this book might inform continuing research into the problem of populism.

1

Who Did What?
Establishing Outcomes

Peru's 1931 presidential election was a watershed moment in that country's political history. As a result of complex struggles that played out over a relatively short period of time, a new mode of political practice—populist mobilization—was introduced, fundamentally revolutionizing the repertoire of practices available to Peruvian politicians. In the process, structures of social solidarities and antagonisms were reconfigured, new modes of claims making were introduced, and conceptions of social and political reality were altered. Future political action would confront a new landscape of political possibility. It truly was a structure-transforming event, in the sense articulated by William H. Sewell Jr. (1996). In light of this fact, it is remarkable that the case has received so little scholarly attention.

The event is not very well known, even amongst Latin Americanist academics. Indeed, its significance has gone underappreciated in Peruvian historiography. Jorge Basadre, the foremost Peruvian historian of the republican era, did recognize the importance of the election and devoted considerable attention to it (Basadre 1999, 12:3167–69, 13:3177–208). But apart from his work, there has been only one monograph-length study, in English or Spanish, that focuses squarely on the election and treats both contenders—Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre and Luis M. Sánchez Cerro—equally (Stein 1980). The one scholarly book on Sánchez Cerro and his political party devotes a mere thirty-one pages to the 1930–1931 period (Molinari Morales 2006). The literature on Haya de la Torre tends to focus overwhelmingly on the figure's changing ideology and to skip quickly over the 1931 election, as it represented just one moment—and, as will be discussed below, ultimately a defeat—in a dramatic political career that lasted over sixty years. The best book on the early years of Haya's party focuses on its social origins and devotes just one