

The 2013 Elections in Honduras: End of the Two Party Systems?

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ABSTRACT

In late 2013, Honduras experienced one of the most important elections in its history. After withdrawal of the presence of Manuel Zelaya in 2009, and the government of Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo (2010-2014), the traditional Honduran bipartisanship and the strong emergence of the "left" in the political scene was first questioned. Besides the Partido Nacional and the Partido Liberal, the Partido Libertad y Refundacion and the Partido Anticorrupcion have achieved significant results. The party structures of the Partido Nacional and the Liberal Party, however, have maintained as key political forces in the Honduran political system, having preserved the political leadership of the country's major cities.

1. Introduction

Honduran elections in 2013 raised the question of whether the traditional bipartisan system, operating since the early twentieth century, that has chaired the Honduran political life starring the Honduras Partido Nacional (PN) and the Liberal Party (PL) would remain. This question was relevant given the return of José Manuel Zelaya Rosales² to the political scene, as a Congress candidate and president of the Partido Libertad y Refundacion (LIBRE); a growing demand of a more orderly and transparent country by Salvador Nasralla, a renowned sports journalist, who created the Partido Anticorrupcion (PAC), and the participation of five more parties³ seeking presence in the political game, taking advantage of representative selection rules which favor the integration of minority political forces.

Moreover, as pointed out by several interviewees,⁴ much of the Honduran population were tired and disappointed with the traditional political system and that opened an opportunity for alternative representation options to be applauded by the Honduran electorate.

In Honduras the President, Members of Congress, mayors and aldermen from all municipalities are chosen the same day, for a period of four years. Also chosen, derived from the presidential election, are the Members of the Central American Parliament who represent the country. Since 1993, municipal elections are held in a separate ballot and since 1997 the President and Members' ballots share the same fate⁵. While the President is not eligible for re-election by constitutional mandate, deputies, may or sand aldermen have no term limitation.

The president and the three presidential appointees compete in one district and are elected by simple majority from all the candidates. The major political parties select their competitors in a primary process a year before the election.

The 128 Members and alternates are elected by departments⁶ in proportion to the votes obtained by using the HARE formula of the larger ratio without onset. Ever since the 2005 elections, citizens can choose between different department candidates by checking the displayed photo and name, and crossing the vote, if they choose to do so, between the options presented by the political parties.⁷ The caucuses are first allocated based on the total number of votes by party, and then within the party for the candidate who has

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² Former President of Honduras elected in 2005 and was abruptly interrupted his term in 2009.

³ Partido Democracia Cristiana (DC), Partido Unificacion Democratica (UD), Partido Innovacion y Unidad (PINU), Partido Alianza Patriotica (PAP), Partido Frente Amplio Politico Electoral (FAPER).

⁴ By end of December 2013 and the first days of January 2014 several political actors and political party sympathizers from La Ceiba (Atlantida), Sonaguera and Tocoa (Colon), Progreso (Yoro) and Tegucigalpa (Francisco Morazan) were interviewed.

⁵ Rodríguez (2013).

⁶ These are the number of representatives assigned based on population.

⁷ Rodríguez (2013). Before 2005 closed and blocked lists for parliamentary candidates were used, and before 1997 it was merged with the Presidential candidacies, allowing the party stricter control of their nominations (Taylor, 2009: 482).

earned the majority of the votes. The electoral quotient varies between departments as does the number of votes a victorious congress person gets.⁸

The main consequence of this form of candidate selection has been the erosion of power that political parties have on their candidates, as they are first subjected to a process of primary election between party supporters, and then to the national election.⁹ An important opening has derived from the previous, and the importance of public image and results of candidates submitted to the election has increased. Paradoxically, party structures have also been strengthened given that candidates need money and a structured and efficient enough logistics system to disperse their image among voters organization.¹⁰

Another result consequential from the previous formulas that it encourages a multiparty game, allowing the integration of members from minority parties in Congress, especially in districts with high possibilities such as Francisco Morazán and Cortés, where despite the small number of votes relating to candidates from other parties, deputies from DC as well as from the UD and PINU.¹¹ This allows them to formally maintain registration as a political organization, as the law states that they must obtain a minimum of 2% of the votes in the presidential election or a deputy in Congress.¹² This formula generates a very open sharing of benches. In districts that have three or more positions up for grabs, all but Gracias a Dios, Islas de la Bahía, where the competition is for one post, and Ocotepeque, where two benches are offered, in the normal electoral process three or more parties get representation.¹³

This opening is a concern of some critics, including the LIBRE campaign coordinator at Colón Andelmo Rivera,¹⁴ which has led to a post-election debate in Congress regarding an electoral reform.¹⁵

With regard to municipal elections, 298 municipalities are disputed. All corporations are composed of a mayor, vice-mayor and between four to ten aldermen, depending on the population of the town, divided by the same logic multiparty election to Congress.

2. Characteristics of the Honduran Political System

Honduras is a country that has gone in some areas of the country from rural to an urban society with great speed. This has made it difficult to anticipate the needs and plan development of a society that has experienced an accelerated rate of change, and has generated unwanted effects.

Municipal management has become downright complicated by the circumstances of a messy and improvised expansion specially in large urban concentrations as Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, which influences major industrial cities like Choloma, Progreso, and Puerto Cortés. The Honduran has migrated to the city first and then abroad in a matter of decades. Other urban centers such as Ceiba, Danlí, Choluteca and Comayagua have emerged as centers of regional development and have also experienced problems of a precipitated growth. They have been affected not only by land management situations, but particularly by insecurity and poverty.

⁸Ajenjo (2007: 171), quoting Taylor, (2006: 119).

⁹ Taylor (2009: 483) notes that in the 2005 elections many "leaders" lost their place in Congress, reelecting only 30% of House members. Andelmo Rivera lamented the loss of power of the party in the cited interview. In his case he was the coordinator of both the FNR and LIBRE campaign in Colón, and was second in party preference. However his partner Dr. Tatiana Canales received fewer than 300 more votes and was elected deputy.

¹⁰In most of the interviews it has been confirmed that many legislative candidates, regardless of their political affiliation, especially in rural areas match, even today, buy the votes directly from many citizens for a sum between 200 and 500 Lempiras.

¹¹The Access of these parties to Congress and their hold on the people does not have to do with the fact of coming from rural or urban areas, as long as there exists a significant number of legislators in dispute to have the electoral ratio's benefit. Rodríguez (2013) states that the fact that Nueva Armenia, located on the Francisco Morazán department is governed by a Christian Democracy candidate proves that the small parties possess a higher approval in urban areas. In this case the population belonging to the Francisco Morazán department. The fact that Francisco Roberto Lopez is the mayor does not have to do with a tug from the political party but it is a result of his personality and relation with the community (he was reelected for a fourth term in the 2013 elections with 1,070 votes).

¹²However the rest of the parties that did not receive this result have not disappeared, and managed to place a representative in the Central American Parliament, as well as several aldermen in the local elections.

¹³In past electoral processes the small parties, PINU, UD and DC obtained a greater number of Members especially in the most competed districts. That is the option that PAC has inherited, with the exception of San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa, where it got a notable public support; in the rest of the department it received several deputies due to the electoral quotient.

¹⁴In a personal interview already mentioned.

¹⁵"Presentarán dictamen de reformas electorales" www.elheraldo.hn, January 9, 2014.

In the past only the economic elites were able to leave the country to study or learn about other societies and lifestyles. Today television has been installed in virtually every household, which together with the migration experience, of family or neighbors, has permeated the imagination of the entire society. This has brought vital changes in the perception and expectations of Honduran citizens. They claim that the changes occur in a more accelerated way, and enter a large degree of frustration when the State does not respond as it is expected.

Lack of resources and results, system corruption, and negative and non-inclusive dynamic internal policies¹⁶ conspire against this purpose. The partial urbanization of the country has not been matched by the "voluntary" modernization of the political system¹⁷. Honduras continues to behave largely as a rural society, attached to local leaderships, political pacts of the elites and their styles of traditional political management, despite the regulatory changes that have been progressively implemented since the early nineties. This combination of tradition and modernity is what often hinders adequate performance of this political system.

Most departments remain rural. Much of the Atlantic coast continues to favor the cultivation of bananas, pineapple, oil palm, and orange. In Olancho, forest and wood cutting are managed. At Copan, Santa Barbara, La Paz, Lempira, Intibucá and Ocotepeque coffee is harvested. In the South and parts of the Atlantic coast shrimp and tilapia are extracted, and melon is grown. In different departments, livestock is prominent, either for fattening or for milk production, as well as mining activities. Property and land issues are still an unsolved problem in some areas.

Also, in these communities, teachers, doctors, lawyers, engineers, and churches are important and respected political actors. The territory and party structures remain key institutions. Citizens distrust the state and close intermediaries seeking to find work, favors as well as the development of infrastructure in municipalities far from large cities. Even among city dwellers, most have rural roots and are looking for "leaders" among traditional politicians, opinion leaders, or successful athletes that the locals admire and even sometimes support electorally.

Some forms, names, and even political parties may change, but structures based on loyal ties are woven throughout the country. These political dynamics are reproduced in Congress, and are reflected in the actions of rulers. Politics in Honduras is local¹⁸, while national dynamics remain important because everything is decided in Tegucigalpa or San Pedro¹⁹. The National Congress has a fundamental role in this system; not only as a legislative body, but as an executor of public policy. The President of Congress manages the legislative agenda and budget in a discretionary manner. Members receive a "subsidy" by the President to meet the needs of its clientele in developing public works departments²⁰, and that gives the President of Congress great power that has conditioned the Executive branch at different times²¹ and has led to several the departure of several Members in open and discreet manners.²² This rural-authoritarian logic is precisely conspiring against the democratic separation of powers; and the reason why despite the political reforms, neither the judiciary or electoral powers are autonomous of national political forces, which are expressed in

¹⁶Acemoglu y Robinson (2013).

¹⁷Many reforms have been driven by the pressure of the international community.

¹⁸ Not even the politicians in active know the members of their parties in other departments, as it has been shown in this paper, trying to figure out who is who in the new National Congress. The traditional leaders are recognized, as well as those who have developed their career as Members, central administration functionaries, or as mayors; but it is very difficult to have information pertaining to the departmental dynamics outside of the region.

¹⁹In fact, the figure of Governor in the department slacks political relevance. This figure is appointed by the President of the Republic and has very limited functions.

²⁰Barrachina (2009).

²¹Carlos Roberto Flores conditioned Roberto Reina(1994-1998), and did not allow Pineda Ponce to do the same with him(1998-2002), although at the end of his government he blocked his administration's public budget. Pepe Lobo played a subordinate role with Maduro(2002-2006) although discreetly distanced himself at the end of the presidential term of office; and acted in the same way during his presidency in which Juan Orlando Hernández exercised a remarkable power from Congress(2010-2014). José Roberto Micheletti and Manuel Rosales(2006-2009) had a relatively respectful relationship, in which the first was subordinated to the second until 2008 and especially in the last year of Mel Zelaya's government, in which it ruptured its relation with the traditional dynamic of political pacts within the elites, forced a confrontation with Micheletti as well as with the State's factual forces and powers.

²²Vote buying is a common practice in Honduras. Duverger notes(1976:18) that this was also the case in England in the eighteenth century, and it is different in many ways elsewhere: "For too long, the English Ministers ensured solid majorities buying votes, if not the consciences of other Members. This was almost official: there existed a window where parliamentarians would be paid for their vote after submitting it."

these elites' pacts, dating back to the early twentieth century, and have been concentrated between nationalists and liberals.

In this sense Taylor's²³ argument remains questionable pointing out that power of the Honduran Congress is weak against the executive branch, because as Shugart and Mainwaring²⁴ suggest, the strong "party power" of the president, who is the party leader determines these relationships. It is true that the President has a great influence on the development of the electoral lists, which has been limited to the opening of these, as well as appointments in the executive branch, but it negotiates and looks for a balance with the territorial party structures. Members often have significant political power for themselves in the territory, and that power rests mainly on the ability to operate politically through discretionary subsidies received by the President of Congress, which has consolidated many, as key regional leaders, especially the National Party. To these leaders, the mayors are included, especially from the Liberal Party, who have managed to stay for extended periods in front of the municipal corporations.

Rather than the "irresistible" partisan presidential power, the reason for the approval of presidential initiatives by National Congress than those contributed by legislators²⁵, rests on the implicit or explicit pact between elites and the local and clientelist logic in which the Honduran deputies move. As seen not only in the 2008-2009 period, as shown by Taylor, did Congress face the presidential pitches.

The "break" caused by President Zelayain 2009 and the attempt to use this "irresistible" presidential power without reaching internal agreements or favoring dialogue, led to the crisis of the Honduran political system. Somehow one of the most important efforts of President Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo since 2010 has been to manage a government of national "integration", composed of representatives from the different political parties in order to restore governance based on a new institutionalization of the political elites.

However, this situation is difficult to reconstruct in the short term because Honduras is in a state of deep political crisis, based on a large multi-causal social discontent that drives many people intuitively want to change the traditional way of doing politics, despite that they unconsciously remaining wary of the possibility of an objective and efficient State while looking for a traditional "cacique". This situation is fueled by the emergence of two political forces that fuel this discourse of change, but as it will be discussed in this paper do not differ significantly in either their leaders or methods of traditional options. The crisis is also paid by a persistent media "war" that tightens political actors and citizens, by joblessness and poverty, as well as the constant fear generated by high rates of homicide, and recently the visibility of drug traffickers.

A sample of party strength, their relationship with the "caciques" and political meanings and leaderships over the territory can be found in Table 1, which summarizes the departments regarding their characteristics and types of leadership. Most of these are present in the current Congress, and have been selected for carrying 3-4 terms in Congress, or some other personal characteristic that is specified. Another example of the importance of local headships we visualize in Table 2, reflecting the political affiliation of the owners of mass media communications in Honduras, many of them also integrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Political Leaderships in the Honduran Departments.

Zones	Departments	Regions	Parliamentary Representation and Mayors	Characteristics	Significant Leaderships	Political
Zona 1. Rural with important urban areas	Atlántida Yoro Comayagua Choluteca	North Central South	PN PL LIBRE PAC	Traditional leaders from PN and PL. Agricultural union and magisterial activities. High rates of homicides in urban areas.	Rodolfo Irfas Navas (PN)*** Mauricio Oliva Herrera (PN) Milton Jesús Puerto (PN) Carmen Rivera Pagoaga (PN)*** Ramón A. Leva Bulnes (PN) (-) Roberto Micheletti (PL) (=) Carlos Miranda Canales (PL)* Quintín Javier Soriano (PL)* Gonzalo Rivera (PL) (-) (=)	

²³Taylor (2009: 484-485).

²⁴Shugart and Mainwaring (1997).

²⁵Taylor and Diaz (1999), and Ajenjo (2007).

					Alexander López Orellana (PL)* Bartolo A. Fuentes (LIBRE) ** José Tomás Ponce (LIBRE) (-) Margarita Dabdoub (LIBRE) (-)
Zona 2. Urban	Francisco Morazán Cortés	North Central	PN PL LIBRE PAC DC PINU UD	Presence of business groups and TPTB. Organized civil society. Union groups activity. Altas tasas de homicidios. High rates of homicides.	Rafael Callejas (PN) (=) José Oswaldo Ramos (PN) Rossel Renán Inestroza (PN) Miguel Pastor (PN)* Ricardo Álvarez (PN)* (=) Mario Canahuati (PN) (=) Ricardo Maduro (PN) (=) Marco Tulio Gutiérrez (PN) (=) Antonio César Rivera Callejas (PN) Carlos Flores Facussé (PL)*** (=) Rodrigo Wong Arévalo (PL)*** (=) Jorge Canahuati Larach (PL)*** (=) José Rafael Ferrari (PL)*** (=) Rossenthal family (PL) *** (=) Marco Antonio Andino (PL) Marlon Lara Orellana (PL) (-) Allan David Ramos Molina (PL)* Gabriela Nuñez Ennabe (PL)*** Alejandro Villatoro (LIBRE)*** Esdras Amado López (LIBRE)*** Pedro Rafael Alegría (LIBRE)** Salvador Nasralla (PAC)*** Doris Gutiérrez (PINU) Families and traditional economics groups
Zona 3. Rural	Santa Bárbara Copán Ocatepeque Lempira	West North	PN PL LIBRE	Traditional leaders from PN and PL. Union and magisterial activities. Influence of organized crime actors.	Juan Orlando Hernández (PN) (=) Román Villeda (PN) Rodolfo Dubón Bueso (PN) Martha Concepción Figueroa (PN) Samuel Reyes (=) Víctor Rolando Sabillón (PL) Lisandro Mauricio Arias (PL) (-) Elvia Argentina Valle (LIBRE) Edgar Antonio Casaña (LIBRE)**
Zona 4. Rural	Colón Olancho	North Central	PN PL LIBRE	Traditional leaders from PN and PL. Agricultural	Porfirio Lobo (PN) (=) Oscar Ramón Nájera (PN) José Francisco Rivera (PN) Fredy Renán Nájera (PL)

				union and magisterial activities. Influence of organized crime actors.	José Manuel Zelaya (LIBRE) Wilfredo Paz (LIBRE)** Adan Funez Martínez (LIBRE)*
Zona 5. Rural	La Paz Intibucá Valle El Paraíso	West South Central	PN PL LIBRE	Traditional leaders from PN and PL. Union and magisterial activities.	José Celín Discua (PN) Pompeyo Bonilla (PN) (=) Eldén Vásquez (PN) Tomás Zambrano (PN) Walter Antonio Chávez (PN) (-) José Alfredo Saavedra Paz (PL) Manuel Iván Fiallos Rodas (PL)
Zona 6. Areas with low population density but important strategically	Gracias a Dios Islas de la Bahía	North	PN PL LIBRE	Influence of organized crime actors.	Jerry Hynds (PL) Paisano Wood family (PL, PN)

Source: Own elaboration. Note: * Consolidated mayors who are not Representatives; ** Union leaders; ***Media owners or influential social media leaders: (-) Consolidated mayors who have moved on to become Congressmen. (=) Are not deputies. Important politicians, opinion leaders or key businessmen.

Table 2. Owners of Mass Media.

Miguel Andonie Fernández (PINU) Died November 30th, 2013	Radio América, Grupo AUDIOVIDEO, Radio San Pedro; Super 100; La Moderna; Radio La Ceiba
Jaime Rossenthal Oliva (Liberal)	Canal 11, 12, 24; Grupo ARMEDIA; CABLECOLOR; Diario El Tiempo; Banco Continental
Carlos Roberto Flores Facusse (Liberal)	Diario La Tribuna
Jorge Canahuati Larach (Nationalist)	Diario La Prensa; Diario El Herald; Diez Lithopress Industrial
Jose Rafael Ferrari (Liberal)	Grupo Televisión; Canal 5; Telecadena 7 y 4; Telesistema 3 y 7; Mega TV; Multidata; Multifon; Emisoras Unidas; HRN; Radio Norte, Suave FM; Rock n'Pop, Vox FM, XY, 94FM; Radio Satélite, Radio Caribe,
Rodrigo Wong Arevalo (Liberal)	Canal 10 o TEN; Hablemos Claro; Hablemos Claro Financiera; As Deportiva; Cromos
Alejandro Villatoro Aguilar (LIBRE)	Radio Globo; Globo TV
Esdras Amado Lopez (LIBRE)	Canal 36 Cholusat Sur.
Rafael Tadeo Nodarse (Liberal)	Canal 6
Rodolfo Irias Navas (Nationalist)	Canal 45, La Ceiba; Televisión 8, Tela; Radio El Patio, La Ceiba; Comunicaciones del Atlántico; Stereo 92, La Ceiba; Stereo 102.5, La Ceiba; Romántica, 103.5 FM La Ceiba; Radio Aguán, Colón; 92.7 FM, Tela; 91.5 FM, Tela.
Jorge Faraj and Camilo Atala (Nationalists)	Canal 54; Banco FiCOHSA
Gabriela Nuñez (Liberal)	Telemás
Others	Diversity of television and radio frequencies at the department or local level. Different Members of the House create their own radio or local television channels given their proximity to the distribution of frequencies in Congress.

Fuente: Own elaboration based on Juan Ramón Martínez (2010).

3. The Electoral Process of November 24th, 2013

a. Presidential Elections

Elections in Honduras took place in an atmosphere of general calm, even though a fear of violent phenomena could take place had been transmitted to the population. Many went to vote early, as several respondents shared; for fear that a major problem could have arisen.

Overall there were no major setbacks and the international community, despite the statements of dissatisfaction by Xiomara Castro and Salvador Nasralla, endorsed with little difficulty the electoral process, considering it right, plural and democratically acceptable.

Table 3. Electoral Results of Presidential Elections (2001-2009)

Party	Elections 2001		Elections 2005		Elections 2009	
	Candidate	% Votes	Candidate	% Votes	Candidate	% Votes
PL	Rafael Piñeda	44,26	Manuel Zelaya	49,90	Elvin Santos	38,09
PN	Ricardo Maduro	52,21	Porfirio Lobo	46,17	Porfirio Lobo	56,56
UD	Matías Funes	1,11	Juan A. Almendarez	1,51	César Ham	1,70
DC	Marco O. Iriarte	0,97	Juan R. Martínez	1,40	Felícito Ávila	1,79
PINU	Olban Valladares	1,45	Carlos Soza	1,02	Bernard Martínez	1,86

Source: Rodríguez(2013) with data from the data base Georgetown.

*The winning candidate is highlighted.

In this presidential election the four main parties coalesced almost all of the votes cast; Juan Orlando Hernandez for the Partido Nacional 1,149,303 (36.89%), Xiomara Castro from Libertad and Refundación, 896.498 (28.78%), Mauricio Villeda 632.320 from Partido Liberal (20.30%) and Salvador Nasralla by the PAC 418.443 (13.43%).²⁶ The turnout was very high as 3,275,346 people voted, representing 61% of the electoral roll, in which many of the estimated 1.5 million citizens living abroad are included.²⁷

The dominance of the traditional parties broke. These, however, maintained their lead in great part of the territory on the strength of their party structures and a very respectable percentage of the total vote. The PN was benefited in Congress with 48 Members, LIBRE with 37, PL27, PAC 13, while the DC, UD and PIN U obtained a seat each.

Regarding their ayorspots, PN reached 183, PL83, LIBRE 31 and DC 1, which ratifies the PN and the P Las the only parties capable of grasping municipalities across departments, while LIBRE emerges as an important force installed in several of the country's municipalities. Of the elected aldermen, PN won 1,284, PL749, LIBRE575, and PAC45. This shows that the three main parties have a presence in towns from every department. Regarding PAC, it achieved representation in thirteen of the eighteen departments, appearing stronger in urban areas. These results support the conclusion that if this trend continues, the four parties have the ability to structure their political bases across the country, and there is a great possibility that the traditional imperfect bipartisanship²⁸ has dissipated from the Honduran political scene for the time being.

²⁶ Romeo Vásquez 6,105 for the PAP (0.20%); OrleSolís 5,194 for the DC (0.17%); Jorge Aguilar 4,468 for PINU (0.14%) and Andrés Pavón 3,118 for the coalition between UD and FAPER (0.10%).

²⁷ On the other hand, derived from the high mortality index in the country, and the institutional debilities proper of a public administration with limitations such as those present in the Honduran, it is unclear if the electoral lists have gone through a cleansing phase to remove the deceased. According to a reliable source, who responded the question, off the record, it is estimated that there are 1.2 million Hondurans living in the United States. The second estimate is of 300,000 more around the world, especially in Spain, Italy and Canada. It is just the population living in the US who are able to vote. Of the 46,331 registered in the electoral lists of Honduras, only 3,096 (7%) voted. (Tribunal Supremo Electoral, 2013).

²⁸Ajenjo (2007, 165)

In relation to small parties, despite the little popular support received, the system accepts and integrates them. They each have a deputy in the Central American Parliament, in addition to 6 from PN, 5 from LIBRE, 3 for PL and 1 for PAC. Also all the parties have aldermen representing them in the municipalities 11 for DC, 6 for PAP, 5 for FAPER, 4 for UD and 3 for PINU.

Table 4. Electoral Percentage Obtained for Each Presidential Candidate in Various Departments in 2013 elections.

	PN	LIBRE	PAC	PL	PINU	DC	UD-FAPER	PAP
Atlantida	32.45%	27.41%	18.03%	21.53%	0.11%	0.17%	0.1%	0.19%
Colon	32.25%	46.33%	4.27%	16.57%	0.18%	0.13%	0.16%	0.11%
Comayagua	37.67%	25.34%	15.24%	21.12%	0.11%	0.12%	0.08%	0.33%
Copan	47.11%	26.3%	6.32%	19.87%	0.09%	0.12%	0.06%	0.13%
Cortes	22.81%	23.45%	34.4%	18.83%	0.15%	0.13%	0.07%	0.16%
Choluteca	42.63%	21.23%	10.72%	24.92%	0.11%	0.14%	0.08%	0.16%
El Paraiso	37.54%	29.51%	4.33%	28.19%	0.1%	0.1%	0.08%	0.17%
Francisco Morazan	35.15%	26.22%	14%	23.75%	0.25%	0.24%	0.13%	0.26%
Gracias a Dios	30.55%	44.57%	0.4%	22.92%	0.3%	0.35%	0.25%	0.65%
Intibuca	52.57%	26.26%	3.1%	17.36%	0.15%	0.13%	0.1%	0.33%
Islas de la Bahia	29.79%	22.25%	10.41%	37%	0.08%	0.1%	0.08%	0.3%
La Paz	45.33%	25.9%	3.27%	24.68%	0.14%	0.27%	0.13%	0.27%
Lempira	58.63%	31.03%	0.9%	9.2%	0.09%	0.06%	0.05%	0.05%
Ocotepeque	42.92%	26.71%	3.04%	26.81%	0.2%	0.14%	0.07%	0.11%
Olancho	40.75%	40.98%	2.83%	14.79%	0.07%	0.23%	0.09%	0.25%
Santa Barbara	42.68%	40.37%	8.28%	8.36%	0.07%	0.11%	0.08%	0.06%
Valle	37.57%	25.49%	9.52%	26.6%	0.04%	0.47%	0.1%	0.22%
Yoro	33.83%	32.81%	13.99%	18.81%	0.1%	0.14%	0.21%	0.11%
Estados Unidos	35.67%	16.6%	23.63%	21.48%	0.68%	0.2%	0.07%	1.69%
Totales	36.89%	28.78%	13.43%	20.3%	0.14%	0.17%	0.1%	0.2%

Source: Elaborated based on information from the Supreme Electoral Court of Honduras.

The PN won the majority of the departments except Colon, Gracias a Dios and Olancho who were obtained by LIBRE; Cortes, where PAC gained a higher percentage of votes and Islas de la Bahia where PL was the first force. In spite of the circumstances in Olancho, Santa Barbara, Yoro and Atlantida, the voters' margin between the PN and LIBRE was minuscule.

In the presidential election, the party structure and the territorial leaders of the PN generated affirmative results especially in rural and semi-rural areas such as Lempira, Ocotepeque, La Paz, Intibuca, Choluteca, El Paraiso and Copan; and satisfactory ratings in Francisco Morazan, Valle, Comayagua and Atlantida. LIBRE, who was competing for the first time, achieved very important results along the Honduran geography, placing as the second political force in almost every department. The image of the candidate, the party structure and municipal leaders made the PL withstand the blow, although Villeda was abandoned to his fate by the traditional leaders of his party. However he achieved acceptable results in many of the Honduran departments, which was reflected by the victory in many of the major municipalities around the country. PAC also achieved acceptable results, especially for a party that was born without a formal structure and rested on the speech of his presidential candidate. Apart from the victory in Cortes, PAC achieved significant results in urban and semi-urban areas of the country by obtaining promising results and this was reflected in the presence of aldermen in several cities: Atlantida, Francisco Morazan, Choluteca, Comayagua, Islas de la Bahia and Yoro.

Voter participation in this process was very important. There were problems in the voters' registry, in relation to its refinement, especially for the amount of Hondurans living abroad, whose importance should be considered. The relative participation shows an increase compared to the last elections, as noted in Table 5, but if the external voters, the ones who cannot vote and who live very different situations abroad, were eliminated from the standards pushing them away from the Honduran political life the percentage of participation would be much more important.²⁹

²⁹ As a matter of fact, by eliminating 1.5 million people from the voting lists, voter participation would be of 84%.

Table5. Total Census and Participation Percentage in Different Electoral Process (2001-2013)

	2001	2005	2009	2013
Census	3,448,280	3,976,550	4,611,211	5,355,112
Participation	66.27%	55.08%	49.88%	61%

Source: Elaboration based on information from the Supreme Electoral Court of Honduras.

b. Elections of Congress Representatives

The doubt that needs to be cleared in this election was whether the traditional Honduran bipartisanship reflected in Table 6, given that the first democratic processes between the Partido Liberal and Partido Nacional had concentrated the majority of votes and seats, would be broken. This situation began to ease somewhat from the electoral reforms of 1997 and especially 2005.

Table 6. Evolution of the Composition of Congress(1981-2009): Numbers and Percentages

PARTIDO	1981	1985	1989	1993	1997	2001	2005	2009
PL	44 (53,7%)	67 (50%)	56 (43,7%)	71 (55,5%)	67 (52,3%)	55 (43%)	62 (48,4%)	45 (35,2)
PN	34 (41,5%)	63 (47%)	71 (55,5)	55 (43%)	54 (42,2%)	61 (47,7%)	54 (42,2%)	71 (55,5%)
PINU	3 (3,6%)	2 (1,5%)	-	2 (1,5%)	5 (3,9%)	4 (3,1%)	3 (2,3%)	3 (2,3%)
UD	-	-	-	-	1 (0,8%)	5 (3,9%)	5 (3,9%)	4 (3,1%)
DC	1 (1,2%)	2 (1,5%)	1 (0,8%)	-	1 (0,8%)	3 (2,3%)	4 (3,1%)	5 (3,9%)
TOTAL	82	134	128	128	128	128	128	128

Source: Alcántara Sáez, Manuel (1999). For 2001, 2005 and 2009 Supreme Electoral Tribunal. Cited in Rodríguez (2013)

Bipartisanship broke in the electoral process of 2013 and for the first time the Honduran people had the opportunity to prove it was possible that different political forces could accede to Congress, with a significant number of deputies.

PL was the only one who achieved a presence in every region of the country due to having won the only two single-member districts. In many departments, it survived thanks to the ratio that allows minority forces to integrate the system; this is also a sign that the party still has presence in the territory and it has passed two very tough tests: the first is a direct result of the polarization of the political crisis generated by the PN and LIBRE, and departed them from the options of the "useful vote" among the electorate, and forced them to rely on the hard vote and territorial structures; the second and more poignant for the liberals: the division of the party and the abandonment of traditional leaders and thereof responsibility to support the candidate, in the most complicated moment for their survival as a political force.³⁰

Table7. Number of Legislators in Every Department per Party 2013.

	PN	LIBRE	PAC	PL	PINU	DC	UD	PAP	FAPER
Atlántida	3	2	1	2					

³⁰ Carlos Flores Facussé, Elvin Santos and Jani Rossenthal abandoned their responsibility and left the party candidates to their fate, hoping for a failure of Villeda and did not calculate the real strength of LIBRE; for that reason, the credit for surviving rests solely on Villeda and the mayors, who should be the ones who guide the needed restructuring of the Partido Liberal, according to Juan Ramon Martinez, in a personal interview on January 5th, 2014. Tegucigalpa.

Choluteca	4	2	1	2					
Colon	1	2		1					
Comayagua	3	2	1	1					
Copan	3	2		2					
Cortes	5	5	6	3			1		
Francisco Morazan	8	6	3	4	1	1			
Gracias a Dios				1					
Intibuca	1	1		1					
Islas de la Bahia				1					
La Paz	1	1		1					
Lempira	3	1		1					
Ocotepeque	1			1					
Olancho	3	3		1					
Paraiso	3	2		1					
Santa Barbara	4	4		1					
Valle	2	1		1					
Yoro	3	3	1	2					
Total	48	37	13	27	1	1	1		

Source: Own elaboration based on information from the Supreme Electoral Court of Honduras.

LIBRE won representations across the country, except in three departments. It exceeded the PN in Santa Barbara, and Colon, where there are important magisterial and agrarian movements, and in Olancho, birth place of Zelaya and Lobo,³¹ it suffered a slight loss in what became a duel of "caciques", yet it occasioned a draw in the division of House members, as in Yoro, combining rural and urban areas where the farmer, teacher and industrial union is very important. In urban areas of Cortes and Francisco Morazan LIBRE gained almost the same members as the PN, while in Atlantida, Comayagua, Choluteca, El Paraiso and Copan it competed with great credibility, with both the Partido Nacional, as the Partido Liberal, who possess important party structures, and chief tains consolidated in these territories.

Crossvoting did not affect the PAC in Cortes in the congressional elections managing to obtain first place and the maximum number of deputies. Also, in Francisco Morazan it obtained excellent results showing that the electorate is primarily urban. In the rest of the departments where PAC placed legislators it was benefited by both the electoral quotient, given that they store the larger portion of the population, and by the approval of inhabitants in the cities of La Ceiba and Tela in (Atlantida), Progreso (Yoro), Choluteca (Choluteca), Comayagua (Comayagua), Danli (El Paraiso), in which the Partido Nacional and Partido Liberal are strong, but in which many inhabitants of these cities heard the message coming from this party and decided to support it.

The Partido Nacional used its party structure and countrywide leadership to maintain most of the members of Congress. While only 49 of the 128 members of Congress (38.28%) were re-elected, the majority comes from PN, in comparison, 28 of the 71 who were re-elected in 2009. Many of them have a long trajectory in Congress. Dating back to 1997, 8 have been reassigned in at least four periods as deputies, and 2 have completed three terms, leading them to have a special relevance in their departments.

In relation to the other parties, the PL has two members of Congress who were re-elected for the fourth time, and three are doing serving their third Congressional period. In PINUDoris Gutierrez has been elected for a third time (previously she had served under the UD); and Elvia Argentina Valle, LIBRE, had already been formerly appointed twice by the PL, and she had held important positions in the government of Manuel Zelaya, so this is also her third time in Congress (since 1997).³² Other representatives have been mayors or aldermen, come from very influential families, or form part of the Honduran oligarchy.

Most deputies are lawyers or engineers, but it seems important to note how many competitors come from the media, or are known sports celebrities, and are known for that reason; and many of them have developed a career in teachers' or other type of syndicalism. Due to the Honduran semi-rural character, it is

³¹ President of Honduras (2010-2014)

³² Several of the representatives had been elected before this date. In the case of the PN bosses such as Irias Navas and Oswaldo Ramos Soto have been serving since 1981; Discua and Najera have also been part of Congress for several terms. Paradoxically Irias and the last two are close collaborators of former president Rafael Callejas, who presently remains as one of the basic standards of the party.

convenient to give special recognition to doctors and other professionals coming from the health sector, for they have a great insight of society and wide acceptance among the population.

Twenty one of the elected officials belonging to every party, aside from the PN presidential designation and the PAC presidential candidate have relationships with the media, while four others also competed and were fairly close to being elected. Twelve legislators, plus one more candidate appointed by the president, almost from LIBRE in totality, have close ties with different Union movements, while two important directors were steps away from accessing to Congress. Nine have been sports figures, and thirteen have a bond with the health sector. Nevertheless, the success this type of professionals has had is an effect of the open electoral system of Honduras, in which the voter can select the people who are trustworthy or deserve the acceptance and admiration as a result of the aforementioned facets.

c. Municipal Elections

If it possible to agree with the argument that the territorial structures of the political parties are fundamental, and that these explain in a great measure the success and consolidation of the political parties in the Honduran democratic process, the importance of the electoral municipal process must also be accepted to understand in an integral manner the Honduran political reality as well as the existing party system.

In this sense, the PN and PL are the most solid structures within the political system of Honduras, given that they control and have a strong presence across the territory. This said, LIBRE has achieved municipal presence in every department of the country through the election of aldermen, and has attained with this victory a great number of municipalities throughout the country, especially in Santa Barbara and Olancho; advancing in a very significant manner in Colon where they won in Tocoa and Bonito Oriental, but remained short in votes in Trujillo and Sonaguera³³.

The number of elected alderman shows with greater detail the presence of political parties and the possibilities they have in creating their structures. PN and PL have a great control over most of the territory, but LIBRE has an opportunity to consolidate their structures across the territory, depending on the work it does in the next couple of years. If it is able to penetrate the traditional bipartisan system deeply rooted in the area, it will establish its place in history. The PAC has accomplished presence in many of the departments, especially in the cities, will also depend on its leaders, and the effort done which will allow the creation of organizations looking to consolidate the party as a political option. Finally, the presence of the minority parties in different localities also deserves to be mentioned. It is in this level where these organizations have a chance of remaining active in the Honduran political system, since all achieve to place aldermen in the various municipalities of the country.

The analysis of this electoral process is not complete without referencing the main municipalities of the country. PN maintains the capital city of Tegucigalpa, which has turned into a nationalistic possession, however, it has won in a very tight manner in San Pedro Sula; city governed by the liberals in the last electoral contestations, and in which PAC has received surprising results. If the PAC alderman do their job correctly, winning the next mayoral elections a real possibility. Several interviewees pointed out that San Pedro Sula is a city with critical citizens, tired of inefficient citizens, such as the "lame duck mayor", or corrupt officials as is the case with several of the predecessors. The groundwork has been set for the PAC, but a latent return by the PL is still an option if they are able to find a trustworthy candidate or it can be retained by PN if they have an exemplary administration.

What is surprising is the persistence of liberal governments in important cities like Comayagua where the mayor was reelected for a fifth term, and Progreso, Puerto Cortes, Choloma and Choluteca, where the same candidates were elected for a third consecutive term. In Danli, the Partido Liberal has won the municipality

³³ The mayoral candidate for LIBRE in Sonaguera explained the situation in a rather eloquent manner. They lost by nine votes, however PN registered 600 people from Olancho, Atlantida and other Colon municipalities in the Sonaguera voting zone and that is how they won. Dagoberto Martinez, interviewed on January 5th, 2014 stated that what occurred is a legal and very common practice, despite affecting the results. Another common, "almost" illegal practice that was mentioned by Andelmo Rivera, LIBRE campaign coordinator in Colon, is the purchase of identification cards. Money is offered to an individual in order for them to partake in the registration tables as a minority party representative (in this case PAP, UD and FAPER); they support the party that has financed them with one more vote to represent the party at the controversy table when deciding on the validity of a vote. This has been a common practice used by both the PN and LIBRE. An example of this practice is that tables that had deputies of minority parties at the time the count could not rely on securing the vote of the appointed "legislator."

for the first time and in La Ceiba, the nationalist candidate was elected under heavy questioning, but who under the wing of the local “cacique” ‘Fito’ Irias Navas, managed to keep the post, overtaking a former mayor and liberal representative that was now competing as a LIBRE candidate.

The continuity of liberals in power highlights several points: that citizenry observe the administration and reward those who have positive results; that the party structures and personalities remain important in Honduras; and that the Partido Liberalis still alive, not just because of the significant total of votes it received in the presidential elections, but also at the mayoral scale, its presence across the country and especially in complex municipalities, like the ones shown in the Table mentioned³⁴.

4. Conclusions

There is not sufficient evidence to state that the electoral fraud has been a significant variable in these electoral results, beyond slight “irregularities” that may have affected the final tallying in any municipality, in which the results have been close or may have favored the election of a candidate or congress person over another from the same organization, given the cross votes and the prioritization of candidates in relation to the individual votes obtained.

The traditional Honduran bipartisanship has suffered a strong blow following the elections of 2013. The PN had a tight victory in a process in which LIBRE has self-victimized as a movement created in response to the coup d’état, and persecuted by the political elites of the country. The PN has utilized as an electoral argument the hardening of criminal sentences and the presence of military police in order to return peace and tranquility to the Honduran people. The PL has survived one of the most delicate moments of its history induced by the profound wounds created by the conflict between Zelaya and his brethren since 2008. This situation has also been exacerbated by the malicious plotting of the Partido Liberal elites who deserted their candidate just hoping for his defeat at the polls in order to return and take over the party. Salvador Nasralla has achieved a surprising electoral result with a platform focused on fighting corruption and without any type of party structure to back him.

We will have to wait until the next electoral process to determine if the two party system has disappeared, and one or two parties with clear forms of governing and influencing Congress and the local structures have consolidated; or if it was all a product of the “instant”, of the fatigue and exhaustion of a population that wants a change of political style.

Mel Zelaya is a traditional politician who comes from the most conservative oligarchies of the country³⁵. While it is possible to think of a personal political evolution, there are no “leftists”³⁶ among his closest collaborators who might come to think that the future will be consolidated in a sort of Mexican PRD in Honduras. Zelaya is mounted on a party in which very different currents interact and the only thing that unites them is the charismatic leadership of its founder. It is necessary to wait and see how they act and behave politically in the coming period, both in Congress and in the municipalities. Also there is clarity if intellectuals from Tegucigalpa come to an understanding with communicators from San Pedro Sula, teachers and union members from different departments and the field workers of Colon and Santa Barbara.

It is a fact the LIBRE was able to build territorial organizations and that it excited a very important sector of the population, several coming from the Partido Liberal as well as others from nontraditional sectors who tended to remain away from electoral processes. It will depend on whether this new found enthusiasm lasts

³⁴ The cases of Progreso, Puerto Cortes and Choloma are particularly important because their configuration seems to be fertile ground for the presence of left-wing groups, such as those represented by LIBRE. They are important industrial cities, where port activities, factory work and industries of all kinds are concentrated. There is a significant organized union presence and a combative press identified with the leftist movement and the social sectors. Also, in this area you can find strong progressive sectors of the Catholic Church, which have a very important degree of activity. Moreover, in these areas the FNRP has had a very important on-goings. However, mayors continue to be reelected.

³⁵ He has been elected representative for his department. A side from being the candidate with the majority of the votes, the PN opponent came in at a close second. On the other hand, the conservative party obtained a higher number of votes than those of LIBRE in the Olancho electoral process. The votes in this department were distributed in a much equilibrated manner between those two parties.

³⁶ The collaborators identified as leftists, Patricia Rodas, Carlos H. Reyes, Victor Meza, Aristides Mejia or Rizzi Moncada have disappeared from the political scene, or have managed to remain very discrete. However, Flores Lanza and Alejandro Villatoro, owner of Radio Globo, were unsuccessful in becoming congressperson.

and the territorial bases are established in an organized manner with little economic support as has been the case until present times.

Salvador Nasralla has a much more difficult situation to manage. His message has hit hard an important and informed sector of the urban population. However his style of authoritarian and traditional leadership conspires against himself and against the consolidation of his political party. A diversification of the message is pertinent and the party's lawmakers need to work to create party structures where they do not exist or where they are weak. If the PAC's democratic style is arranged and diversified correctly, it will confirm and attract more a larger number of votes, breaking away from the norm. If the people who do not consider themselves political, do not get involved in politics, and rely on the "man-idol", those who are "informed" will eventually get tired of seeing "more of the same."

In the case of the small parties benefitted by the ratio system, there is constant pressure to have the electoral system revised. It is difficult to accept that organizations with less than 0.5% of the popular vote have a deputy in the Central American Parliament. In the case of policymakers, public support is greater, as an effect of crossover voting, but the frustration from others candidates who are not elected despite obtaining a larger number of votes is understandable. It is necessary to see how the review of the electoral system evolves.

Mauricio Villeda will try to rescue the PL and probably will pact with the mayors and municipal party structures looking for an open door strategy with the aim of attracting back many of the party activists who deserted for various reasons. The electoral process has fortified him within the party and the traditional "caudillos" have been publicly evidenced and shown as a weak leg in front of the liberals. He will probably be supported by the liberal leaders who will not allow their party to continue weakening in an indefinite form.

Juan Orlando Hernandez is a traditional right-wing politician. He will govern with ability and with no contemplations of being a "cacique" and will rely on the party machinery as well as the effective power associated to it. It is very possible that through an agreement or a direct purchase of the votes

It is very possible to accomplish his objectives without much resistance through an agreement or direct purchase of votes of other parties' deputies, and that one of its main tasks is reviving the traditional bipartisan system showing that LIBRE and PAC are just a fad, and the leaders of these parties have the same defects as those who are considered to be the usual suspects, because they too form part of "the usuals."

One of the biggest challenges this administration will face is the security matter and dealing with "organized crime" as well as pressure from the United States. It will be very difficult to handle so many challenges successfully such as lifting the country economically. For that assignment, it will rely on a "party" government leaving behind the style and conditionings of Pepe Lobo and expecting Congress to be under control of his most trusted collaborators.

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