ELECTORAL REVOLUTIONS : A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RAPID CHANGES IN VOTER TURNOUT

by
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A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Department of Political Science
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

September 2020

DISSERTATION APPROVAL PAGE

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Title: Electoral Revolutions: A Comparative Study of Rapid Changes in Voter Turnout

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Degree awarded September 2020.

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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September 2020
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In the political science scholarship on democratic elections, aggregate voter turnout is assumed to be stable, and depends upon an acquired habit across the electorate. Large turnout variations in a short period of time are therefore usually attributed to negligible contextual factors. This work establishes that such variations are more frequent than commonly thought and creates a novel theoretical framework and methodological approach for systematically studying rapid changes in voter turnout across Western Europe and Latin America. I attribute dramatic changes in voters' participation, labeled *electoral revolutions*, to transformations in the party system competition and institutional credibility happening inside the national political context. Methodologically, it applies a detailed qualitative codebook to large samples of broad diffusion newspapers to trace the evolution of politics before the watershed elections that took place in France (1967), Great Britain (2001), Costa Rica (1998) and Honduras (2013). It finds that voter turnout dramatically increases in the presence of strengthening opposition parties, more credible institutions and a more differentiated party systems. Conversely, electoral participation is gravely damaged when opposition formations become weaker and more divided, when the administration loses popular support and political parties become less ideologically diverse. Finally, it establishes electoral revolutions as substantially important political phenomena with deep political and societal consequences, which policymakers and scholars choose to neglect at their own risk.

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Lioy, Alberto, Marc Esteve Del Valle, and Julian Gottlieb. "Platform Politics: Party Organisation In The Digital Age." Information Polity 24.1 (2019): 41-58.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the members of my dissertation committee – Craig Kauffman, Craig Parsons and Erin Beck – for all their feedback and advice at every step of the project. I am especially grateful to Craig Kauffman for understanding the research question early on, and respecting my idea of an *eventful* theorization despite the challenges it posed at empirical level. I would also like to thank Aaron Gullickson, who accepted to be the institutional member and provided a stimulating counterpoint from another discipline, and Robert Adcock of American University, whose workshop on historical methods at SPSA 2020 helped me think about the broader nature of my project.

Outside of the committee, the single most important influence on my human and professional development during this doctoral degree has been Gerry Berk, whose kindness and continuous push to treat the research material at face value has been invaluable.

Looking back, I would have never arrived here without the mentoring and advice of the academics that believed in me along the way and treated me as a scholar in the making, Nikos Marantzidis, Fabio Bagliano, Julian Gottlieb, and, above all, my father Antonio Lioy.

My years in Oregon would have not been the same without my *compagne* and *compagni* of the GTFF grad student union, with whom I shared two years of laughing, crying, long nights, contract negotiations, major, and minor, victories and defeats. Working for the union also kept me anchored to a reality where people don't understand why they should participate in a democratic process they feel is stacked against them, which is a problem of lacking political credibility, just like the ones I discuss in this work.

My appreciation also goes to Missy's two kids.

A final thanks to the people at the Center of Latino and Latin American Studies at the University of Oregon – which provided funding and support for my archival research in Costa Rica in the summer of 2019 – in particular to Feather Crawford and Eli Meyer.

To my wife Kat,
for always being on my side
through all this madness.

Ό,τι σκοτώνεις
είναι δικό σου
για πάντα.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In June of 2001, the British electorate Tony Blair's *Labour* Party into government, in what the media called "a quiet landslide". Indeed, the outcome was no surprise, but the abstention of 5 million more Britons than in the 1997 election certainly was. As the largest fluctuation of voter turnout in Britain since 1950, it diminished the extent of the party system's representation of society. This kind of dramatic fluctuation in electoral participation goes beyond recent transformations in European democracies. In March 1967, the French legislative election mobilized 4 million voters more than the 1962 election. This quick rise in voter turnout (+12%) represented a vote of confidence for the young institutions of the *Cinquième Republique*, and delivered a balanced outcome where the leftist opposition gained seats to the detriment of the Gaullist coalition. The failure of the left to win by a small margin in 1967 led to the eruption of civil unrest of May 1968.

Scholars of comparative politics do not usually consider either of these elections a watershed event, and yet in both cases millions of voters changed their behavior in the space of four or five years. Oddly enough, political scientists dedicate volumes to social movements that mobilize a few thousand citizens, but neglect these dramatic transformations of electoral participation. Given the deep consequences of these electoral revolutions for representation, I believe that policymakers and academics ignore them at their own peril. Book-length analyses have been written about both the 1967 French election and the 2001 British election, but never before have they been tackled together, or along with similar or divergent cases. Given how elections are the cornerstone of modern democracy, and voter turnout is one of the most researched topics in political science, this gap needs explanation.

Strong fluctuations in electoral participation are not prominent in the literature, because traditional theorizations of voting generally see aggregate level turnout as stable. The exception has been a slow declining trend in institutionalized democracies, mostly visible in Western Europe. These long term variations are generally attributed to cohort effects, linked to how societal values and partisan affiliation have changed over decades. At the same time, cohort effects cannot be held responsible for short-term changes in voter participation. As a consequence, quick fluctuations are hard to explain and are attributed to generic variations of the political context. To fill this significant gap, this study

creates a theoretical framework to look at sudden, dramatic variations of voter turnout such as the 2001 British election and the 1967 French election, which constituted veritable **electoral revolutions**.

This study contributes to the existing literature by (1) measuring the volatility of voter turnout in general elections; (2) exploring the current academic literature on voter turnout for establishing why a significant gap exists, then (3) creating a comprehensive theoretical framework to explain elections as the outcome of discursive processes, centered around political credibility and competition. The framework is then complemented with (5) an original research methodology which establishes the importance of events through the observation of media samples, and then (5) guides empirical case-study research on the causes of rapid changes in voter turnout between two consecutive national elections. Ultimately, this work (6) formulates a novel theory of voting based on the opposition's strength and cohesion, ideological differentiation in the party system, and credible national political institutions.

1.1 – Defining Electoral Revolutions

Before proceeding further, this introduction lays down a few key concepts.

I define voter turnout as *the share of registered voters who show up at polling stations to cast a valid, invalid or blank ballot.* I decided against using turnout calculated on the basis of the voting-age population, since it mainly relies on census data, which variations over ten-year cycles which are much more artificial than registry-related fluctuations (Clouse, 2011). Lacking a previous conceptualization for *electoral revolutions*, elections which represent large deviations from the status quo in terms of participation, adopting a quantitative threshold is a good first step. A reasonable technique consists in doubling the average variation in a sample of elections. Voter turnout change (in absolute values) between two consecutive democratic elections in post-1945 Western Europe and Latin America is 4.35%. Rounding up for convenience, I adopted a 10% threshold.

I define an **electoral revolution** as:

a change of either sign in voter turnout between two consecutive elections, such as it alters significantly and sizably ($|\Delta| > 10\%$) the portion of the electorate that is electorally active.

In addition, an electoral revolution of positive sign, corresponding to rapid growth in electoral participation takes on the adjective *expansive*, or positive. On the other hand, a negative, or *restrictive* electoral revolution takes place when the large turnout variation is of negative sign, corresponding to a much stronger presence of abstaining voters.

To complete this brief conceptual introduction, an *expansive electoral revolution* is technically impossible in the presence of a high level of voter turnout. In every election for some kind of office some voters will be unable to go to the polls because of personal impediments, setting the upper boundary of voter turnout at a few percentage points under 100% (except in cases of fraud). Such a boundary has been in play in several countries of Western Europe where turnout rates have remained very high since World War Two (Belgium, Denmark…) where no *electoral revolution* has ever taken place. The same kind of boundary is technically possible for a *restrictive electoral revolution* under very low turnout, approaching a situation where nobody votes. At the same time, this tends to be less likely, since a single vote becomes more powerful when people cast less ballots.

The academic literature generally dismisses the importance of drastic, dramatic variations in voter turnout by attributing them to changes in the political context, but without going into detail. Given the novelty and complexity of studying *electoral revolutions*, and the necessity to adopt an appropriate theoretical and methodological approach, this study moves away from a static behavioral approach. Instead, it re-conceptualizes electoral participation as the outcome of event-led transformations in national political contexts. Two consecutive elections for the same office frame temporally the occurrence of an electoral revolution. Specifically, this study proposes to look at electoral processes following the occurrence of a series of events that alter the discourse about the political system's credibility and competition. This process-based approach is innovative because it allows the researcher to deal with contingency in a systematic way, and generates a dynamic theory out of a complex bundle of empirical data. My work uses broad-diffusion newspapers covering the national political cycle as data source, which allowed me to immerse in the contingency of the events without the mediation performed by the following academic work.

While conceptualizing electoral revolutions and political processes in the most universal sense possible, this project focuses on four watershed elections across two different geopolitical regions. The French election of 1967 and the Honduran election of 2013 were two instances of *expansive electoral revolutions*, where dramatic increases of voter turnout followed the renewed credibility of national institutions and increased party system

differentiation through the strengthening of a left-wing opposition. On the other hand, the restrictive electoral revolutions that took place in the United Kingdom in 2001 and in Costa Rica in 1998 saw dramatic drops in electoral participation due to de-polarization of old party systems and amidst broad corruption scandals that undermined institutional legitimacy. After a selection of appropriate sources for each country, I assembled a large sample of articles covering the period between the two consecutive elections where the electoral revolution took place. The complete codebook has been applied to newspaper material in English, French and Spanish. Each article in the samples is coded for the presence of a mechanism related to voter turnout. Once the coding is completed, one can trace the evolution of the different factors that led to dramatic changes in voters' participation.

1.2 – Existing Theories Of Voter Turnout

The difficulty of explaining large changes in voter turnout is linked to a more general problem of behavioralism in explaining voting and elections. This standard approach has produced a corpus of findings that might partially explain why some people vote more frequently than others, but is inconclusive as to what institutional configuration might be more conducive to higher turnout. That is because, generally speaking, perfect political institutions do not exist. Citizens of countries with proportional representation often debate the necessity of adopting more majoritarian systems, while in two-party systems under first-past-the-post, a more proportional electoral law is often seen as the only path to a more empowered electorate. Yet, people might not have a clear idea of how many parties exist in their country or what their exact ideological positioning is, but they do have a sense of whether an election is a foregone conclusion or if the political institutions in their country are trustworthy.

Normatively, electoral participation is valued as a thermometer of democracy, since representation is only possible if people actively choose their officials. Therefore, political scientists have produced much reflection concerning the nature of voting and the importance of electoral turnout. Authors have asked whether the legitimacy of the democratic process is preserved at low levels of voter turnout (Lipset, 1983; Teixeira, 1992; Lijphart, 1997); have been alarmed by higher participation rates among more affluent

voters for their policy consequences (Verba et al., 1996; Hicks & Swank, 1992); or concerned with surges in turnout that include unattached voters, unconcerned with the preservation of democratic values (Bennett & Resnick, 1990). A normative media discourse also contributes to shape voters' decisions, with frequent appeals to turn out during times of political turmoil.

For a long time, rational choice theory has been the dominant approach to the theorization of voting. Within the discipline, these models of voter turnout gained traction in the post-war period most notoriously through the works of Anthony Downs (1957), William Riker and Peter Ordeshook (1968). These works saw voting as the outcome of an individual weighing of costs and benefits. The model's calculation was based on the idea that benefits for any voter must be weighed by the probability that one's additional vote cast is the marginal vote – the vote that decides the election in favor of one's preferred candidate. An individual would then choose to vote when the combination of probability and benefits is larger than perceived costs. Ultimately, it was demonstrated that aggregate turnout cannot be successfully explained through this theory, due to the famous "paradox of voting" (Fiorina, 1990), i.e. democratic turnout is relatively high, but the probability of deciding the election is extremely low when the electorate is large, rational choice predicts that nobody should vote in general elections. In the following decades scholars proposed several modifications of this initial theory, masterfully summarized in Blais (2000), but none of them seemed fully capable of salvaging it. Given rational choice's shortcomings in providing a satisfying theory of voting, psychological mechanisms were proposed to explain it at the individual level through traits determined by education, affluence, age, partisan attachments, and civic duty.[1]

Considering now aggregate level electoral participation, scholars keep looking for empirical confirmations of different hypotheses. A conspicuous number of large-N regression studies of turnout levels have measured the impact of different electoral institutions, political systems, party competition, patronage, and electoral campaigns, among other factors. Oddly, this wealth of scholarship coincides with a lack of consensus in the research community on a core model of voter turnout (Smets and Van Ham, 2013). What is more, these works report marginal coefficients whose calculation depended upon cross-sectional variations, so they generally neglect short-term temporal variations. Recently, to consolidate a massive amount of material, some scholars created summaries

[1]see Harder and Krosnick (2008) for a complete list of possible drivers of turnout.

(Geys, 2006; Blais; 2006), and meta-analyses of the determinants of voter turnout (Smets and VanHam, 2013; Cancela and Geys, 2016). From the comprehensive work by Cancela and Geys, a few factors emerge as significant and strongly correlated with turnout levels in over 70% of the studies that use them as an independent variable. They include (sign of the effect in brackets): compulsory voting (+), campaign expenditures (+), registration requirements (-), past turnout (+), proportional systems (+) and population stability (+).

On the other hand, at individual level, given how the calculus of voting fails at explaining why so many people vote, a rival core theory based on psychological insight has gained ground. The persistence of the academic belief that civic duty is fundamental to the act of voting, ranging all the way from Campbell et al. (1960) to Blais and Achen (2019), has resulted in a copious literature that explains turnout as the aggregate result of acquired habit in the electorate (Rapeli et al., 2018; Aldrich, 2011; Franklin, 2004). Empirical research points to the existence of a psychological threshold of consecutive elections – an average of three – after which voting becomes engrained (Plutzer, 2002). At a cognitive level, habit theory relies upon a life-cycle model that explains voting as the result of an individual learning process. Young voters are thought to vote less because they have not yet internalized voting as a civic duty, therefore patterns of voting stabilize over time within age cohorts (Franklin, 2004). Nowadays, it is largely established that information is the link between personal characteristics and voting (Matsusaka, 1995), and that exogenous shocks that change an individual's voting habits have long lasting consequences on their future behavior (Dinas, 2012). Then, focusing upon changes in participation over time, this strand of work explains the generalized fall of voter turnout in Western democracies as a consequence of the longer time that nowadays young adults spend without assuming roles and behaviors connected with adulthood such as homeownership and marriage.

Inside the recent literature, three important investigations have directly addressed voter turnout changes. First of all, a study of congressional turnout found that turnout variations in single districts are significantly correlated with changes in party competition and campaign spending (Clouse, 2011). In the same vein, Fisher (2007) recognized that since voter turnout and party shares are largely codetermined, the only way to obtain non-spurious results is to observe their short-term variations jointly. Last, in her study of economic turnout Rowe (2016) observed that different European countries witnessed large rapid variations of opposite sign after the onset of the Great Recession, where the sign depended upon contextual factors. These works offer some important lessons: they situate political competition and the party system at the core of turnout variations; the turnout-

related part of citizens' behavior needs separate consideration from the rest; contextual factors matter a great deal and are not to be dismissed. The following section elaborates upon these observations to create a working theory of electoral revolution within a broader theoretical framework.

1.3 – Theorizing Electoral Revolutions

In sum, on the one hand there is a rational theory that is too focused on the individual scale to explain voters' collective behavior, and on the other hand, an alternative theory better equipped for explaining slow change, and has not yet dealt with rapid transformations. Cohort-related effects might explain long-run variations of turnout, but short-term aggregate changes are still seen as a consequence of the current *political context* (Heath, 2007). This same empirical evidence appears to hold at individual level, with Aldrich et al. (2010) showing how changes in voters' personal context, such as moving to a new house, affect the likelihood of voting. Given this shortcoming of existing theories in addressing rapid turnout changes, what exactly constitutes the *political context* of an election?

Academic work on voting uses expressions such as "electoral context" and/or "political context" frequently to indicate a loosely tied bunch of elements specific to political constituencies, including institutional configurations (Heath, 2007; Marsh, 2002; Vrablikova, 2014; Kluver and Spoon, 2014, Carlin and Singer, 2011; Martinez and Orriols, 2014; Seabrook, 2010). Given the vagueness of the expressions *political* and *electoral context*, some scholars have attempted to turn them into more detailed characterizations. In their *Citizens, Context and Choice* edited volume, Caul and Anderson (2011) divide political context between a component of electoral supply and one of political efficacy. They offer an early operationalization, by theorizing how their effects on turnout can be direct or indirect, and then testing them through the *CSES*[2] dataset. In a similar vein, Schmitt and Wessels (2008) divide the *electoral* context into two dimensions that matter for voters' choice: on one side the structure and differentiation of political supply (**competition**), and on the other the presence of effective institutions for insuring the translation of electoral results into policymaking (**credibility**). This work adopted their simple, but extremely powerful

[2] *Comparative Study of Electoral Systems*

conception of context and expanded it into a large political framework. In other words, this intuitive theorization constitutes the backbone of this study.

Generally speaking, an election is **credible** if "the institutions are able to translate electoral results into public policy" (Schmitt & Wessels, 2008), meaning that there are fair rules for the players participating in the election and an accountable political system. Hanna (2009) also notes that citizens exercise their right to abstain when they perceive the election as unfair or illegitimate, i.e. when credibility is low. The credibility of an election changes when something damages or improves the reputation of political institutions, with participation increasing when political institutions gain legitimacy (and vice-versa). As for the other half of political context, an election is **competitive** if the political supply (i.e. the party system's configuration) is (1) well-structured, *i.e.* the winner is uncertain before the election, and (2) differentiated, meaning that voters choose between a representative range of alternatives (Schmitt & Wessels, 2008). Just like credibility, competition among political parties varies between elections, driving changes in participation, with larger numbers of people turning out in more competitive districts and elections, *ceteris paribus* (Blais, 2006).

My main hypothesis is therefore that variations in credibility and competition levels are able to break the psychological habit that prompts people to vote or to abstain, not just for a few individuals, but for broad swaths of the electorate. Extreme, consistent and sustained variations in the credibility and competition levels of a national political system during the course of a legislature are bound to produce *electoral revolutions*. Intuitively, if these two dimensions explain turnout changes, they must also account for its stability. We know that after the Second World War in Western Europe and North America, credibility has historically been stable, since political institutions resulted from entrenched political compromises and parties followed societal cleavages (Lipset and Rokkan, 1968), while competition could slightly change between elections, and the emergence of catch-all parties and then cartelization slowly damaged it (Katz & Mair, 2009). Therefore, one can reasonably link stable turnout in Western Europe to balanced patterns of competition within institutionalized party systems and to the continued credibility of post-war democratic institutions.

Generally speaking, I hypothesize that the presence of a strong wave of change in both credibility and competition, appearing in the years between two consecutive elections and observable through a chain of nationally salient events, is a sufficient condition for an *electoral revolution*. At the same time, is it possible to have an *electoral revolution* through a

strong change of either credibility or competition? This might be the case, but such instances should be rare, because of the need for an even stronger variation in one of the two single component. Table 1.1 offers a quick elaboration of how different combinations of changes in credibility and competition interact to generate changes in electoral participation, with an illustrative example from a real election provided for each case. Note that this study tests for the simultaneous necessity of substantial changes in the perception of credibility and competition to generate an electoral revolution. Specifically, the presentation of empirical data at the end of chapter 2 arbitrates the matter, showing which components of credibility and competition show consistency over the cases.

TABLE 1.1 – ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES of TURNOUT VARIATIONS

CHANGE in COMPETITION	CHANGE in CREDIBILITY	ELECTORAL REVOLUTION?	REAL ELECTION	TURNOUT CHANGE %
positive	positive	**LIKELY**	France, 1967	**+12.2%**
positive	absent	RARE	Germany, 2017	+4.7
positive	negative	NEVER	US, 2016	-0.2%
absent	positive	RARE	Italy, 1994	-1%
absent	absent	NEVER	Belgium, 2014	+0.2%
absent	negative	RARE	Ukraine, 2006	-1.7%
negative	positive	NEVER	Serbia, 2000	+0.3%
negative	absent	RARE	US, 1984	+0.7%
negative	negative	**LIKELY**	Chile, 2013	**-37.4%**

After this broad characterization of conceptual categories, the next step is the explicit adoption of a suitable model of the social world. Given that *electoral revolutions* are rapid transformations in political context and voters' habits, temporality plays an important role. Generally speaking, all elections represent critical junctures, where the unfolding of political and electoral processes produces a new formal political equilibrium, as new vote shares and parliamentary seat allocations follow the election. As a specific type of election, *electoral revolutions* are no exception. The task of the researcher is to explain how a country goes from one election to the next, by following the unfolding of the national political process. Given how the expressions "political process" and "policy process" are sometimes considered synonymous within the policy literature, while "electoral process" usually designates operations related to campaigns and voting, a clarification is in order.

credibility and competition are the two key components in political context, but they are still broad, hard to measure concepts. One needs to observe the factors that influence them. Given the importance of temporality, they are best conceptualized as the

result of **political processes**. Over time a series of events contribute to reshape credibility and competition, by transforming the fault lines in the political discourse. The empirical part of this work reconstructs such processes in four detailed case studies. Most citizens experience the national political discourse surrounding them, but have only limited control over it. Given this peculiarity, observing their decision-making process passes through the scrutiny of what the electorate observed and heard in the years between two elections. Following the lead of prominent methodological scholars such as Andrew Abbott and William Sewell, I advocate for placing the empirical focus upon the reconstruction of critical/salient/focusing events. Abbott (1995) observed how the focus of social science inquiry had been misplaced, through an over-reliance upon measuring the effects of competing causes, and instead advocated for an approach that hinges upon the categorization of empirical events. Sewell (1996) came in from a different perspective, realizing that the other social sciences can draw from history's focus on events, and add a more rigorous methodological categorization of what an event *is* and *does*. In my work, instead of relying upon static variables to explain large, rapid variation of electoral participation, I propose to follow how the unfolding of focusing events affected a series of factors altering the credibility and competition of the political process.

The media has a fundamental role in this sense, and given the temporal and geographic span of this research project, newspapers are the most obvious data source. Even if nowadays their audience is shrinking, they still reflect the most salient events, and provide detailed political information. The adoption of a capacious theoretical framework helps in creating boundaries around what constitutes credibility and competition. In practice, this work will follow a methodological approach that traces the evolution of events using different hypotheses over their impact. As will be outlined in the following chapter, 18 mechanisms, all of which can be positive or negative, have been elaborated and then made explicit through a qualitative codebook. This codebook is then used to classify the source material, and establish links between political events happening in the social world, and variations in credibility and competition that lead to changes in voting behavior.

Before moving to a contextualization of turnout volatility and to the case selection process, I examine the nature of this social scientific project at a higher level. This work can be characterized as having components that belong to both theory testing and theory building. It is a form of theory testing, in that different mechanisms connect credibility and competition to events are constructed in accordance to existing theories and previous studies' findings. After coding events, temporal patterns can be traced, making it possible

to test for which have been aligned with the final predicted outcome of *electoral revolutions*. For example, if there are five different pathways to increased/decreased competition, and only three are present across the cases, the other two hypotheses are called into question.

In parallel, it is also a form of theory-building because previous studies did not consider variations in electoral participation, but only focused on voter turnout levels. Most importantly, it was not known *a priori* which mechanisms would be salient across all four cases, and whether the dynamics for positive and negative cases will be radically different. As the very first effort of theorization of cases of *electoral revolution*, this study's final outcome will be to generate a working theory that can then be applied to a larger universe of cases. In particular, the most important test for theory will come from elections with small or minimal turnout variations, where one should observe only minimal changes in the credibility and competition of national politics, or changes which even each other out.

1.4 – Selecting Electoral Revolutions

Most research projects focusing on elections are limited to a single country, or at most a single geopolitical region (Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa). This is rather limiting, given how partisan elections for high office have spread all across the world during the last two waves of democratization. Under conditions of availability of the data, a global focus is especially beneficial for explorative theory-building work such as this one. In this case, the attention falls upon Western Europe and Latin America, momentarily leaving the rest of the world aside. Why these two geopolitical regions? This choice assures that a universe of cases presents enough variation while also avoiding comparisons between cases that are too far away from each other. In addition, cross regional comparison guarantees that any regularity observed across the cases does not just depend upon local characteristics, such as compulsory voting or *caudillismo* in Latin America, or upon coalition dynamics and parliamentarism observed in European parliamentarism. In other words, the wide range of possible cases excludes of region-specific factors from causing of the outcome of interest.

Selecting from Western Europe guarantees a long series of democratic elections across a wide number of countries, mostly in institutionalized party systems. It is precisely in such environment that *electoral revolutions* should be rare or non-existent, because over

the decades these political contexts tended towards stability. Latin American party systems emerged as early as mid-XIX century, but interruptions of the constitutional order continued until 30 years ago, when the region widely democratized. As a consequence of this instability, the expectation is to find a higher number of electoral revolutions inside of this regional sample. To make elections from these two regions even more comparable, the focus is narrowed to general or parliamentary/legislative elections, leaving strictly presidential elections out of the picture. Given how this work hinges upon parties and party systems, and that many parliamentary European democracies do not hold elections for the highest office, this restriction is appropriate.

As shown in Table 1.2, over the past 70 years Western European democracies saw a higher average turnout (~81%), and smaller average variations (2.66%), in comparison to their Latin American counterparts. At the same time, a declining trend is visible in Western European elections, with a 9% average decline between levels of electoral participation between 1945 and 1985, and the latest decade in the sample (2006-2016) when the average fell below 75%. Such decline is not as present for Latin America, where the gap over time is rather minimal (3%). The most striking difference regards voter turnout volatility. While it slightly increased in Western Europe over time, leading towards 3%, the average variation remains well under the Latin American value (6.88%). As for the frequency of electoral revolutions in the two regions, a clear peak can be observed in Latin America in correspondence with the last wave of democratization, when the average

TABLE 1.2 – SUMMARY STATISTICS, LEGISLATIVE TURNOUT VOLATILITY (1945-2016)

region	variable	1945/ 1955	1956/ 1965	1966/ 1975	1976/ 1985	1986/ 1995	1996/ 2005	2006/ 2016	1945/ 2016
WESTERN EUROPE	*Average Turnout Level*	*83.32*	*84.30*	*84.61*	*84.14*	*79.28*	*76.81*	*74.38*	**80.86**
	Avg Variation (abs.value)	*2.53*	*2.37*	*2.60*	*2.53*	*2.61*	*3.02*	*2.81*	**2.66**
	N (elections)	*54*	*47*	*50*	*58*	*56*	*49*	*57*	**371**
	Post-transition average								**4.09**
	large variations >|5|%	*6*	*7*	*7*	*8*	*7*	*10*	*7*	**52**
	electoral revolutions >|10|%	*1*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*1*	*2*	**11**
LATIN AMERICA	*Average Turnout Level*	*71.50*	*73.50*	*66.20*	*71.50*	*69.90*	*67.10*	*68.30*	**69.60**
	Avg Variation (abs.value)	*8.67*	*7.04*	*5.70*	*6.45*	*9.13*	*6.74*	*5.10*	**6.88**
	N (elections)	*29*	*36*	*28*	*31*	*47*	*46*	*50*	**267**
	Post-transition average								**7.18**
	large variations >|5|%	*10*	*15*	*14*	*13*	*23*	*19*	*19*	**113**
	electoral revolutions >|10|%	*5*	*8*	*4*	*5*	*15*	*12*	*7*	**56**
WHOLE SAMPLE	*Average Turnout*	*79.19*	*79.60*	*77.77*	*79.74*	*74.98*	*72.16*	*71.52*	**76.10**
	Average Variation	*4.50*	*4.26*	*3.72*	*3.66*	*5.44*	*4.81*	*3.87*	**4.35**

variation surged to an inflated 9% and voters changed their behavior from election to election.

The comparative politics subfield is premised upon the application of a comparative method of analysis. This methodology depends upon the choice of appropriate cases within the universe of phenomena of inquiry. Over time, scholars have proposed different criteria for performing this task in ways that meet the needs of specific research projects. A combination of most-similar and most-different types of design (Goertz and Mahoney, 2012) underlies the methodology for my case selection, where the consistency of the empirical results over comparable cases with different starting conditions insures the external validity of the results. I chose two *expansive* and two *restrictive* cases, one per region, applying a (±)10% threshold for *electoral revolutions*, to the universe of national legislative elections (in parliamentary AND presidential systems).

Given how the universal assumption of turnout stability is an artifact of the stability of political institutions and party systems in some established democracies, it is good to orient the case selection towards different levels of institutionalization. As shown in the previous section, Western Europe provides cases of high levels of institutionalization and some older instances of *electoral revolution* in already consolidated party systems. As a contrast, Latin America offers cases of mid-level institutionalization, and presidential systems of government. Including cases of presidentialism is another good test for the theory, since most European democracies are parliamentary. At the end of this section, a complete listing of the *electoral revolutions* in Western Europe and Latin America since 1945, excluding clear cases of authoritarianism, is given in *Table 1.3* and *Table 1.4*. It represents the universe of cases used for performing the case selection. Since my theory's validity depends upon evidence of temporal variations, the comparability of societies, institutions, and party systems is guaranteed. A comparative study of, say, credibility and competition *levels* across different countries would be hard to perform, since both depend on highly contextual elements. Temporal variations are easier to evaluate, through the examination of qualitative and quantitative evidence of a widespread change in their perception. Therefore, when the comparison shifts from levels to variations, initial differences between national institutions, party systems and societies become less relevant, as long as their change consistent during the period of analysis.

Starting the case selection from Western Europe, Table 1.3 shows that only 11 *electoral revolutions* have taken place across the region between 1945 and 2016, three of which within the traditionally vibrant political system of Cyprus (1981, 2011, 2016). Of the remaining seven cases, four refer to *expansive* and three to *restrictive electoral revolutions*. Of the *expansive* cases, two are atypical for Western Europe, following democratization (Spain, 1982), and major war (Great Britain, 1950). The last two cases are the French election of 1967 and the Finnish election of 1962, which reflected profound transformations in national party systems. Since the role of institutional reforms to *electoral revolutions* is crucial to this study, the French case is best suited to test the theory, because the 1967 legislative election follows the first presidential election of 1965. It offers a hard test of the theory, because introducing direct Presidential elections is generally thought to depress legislative turnout, which it did in France in 1962, but the 12% turnout surge in 1967 cannot be explained by the same token.

TABLE 1.3 – ELECTORAL REVOLUTIONS, WESTERN EUROPE (1945-2016)

restrictive (ΔT<-10%)				expansive (ΔT<-10%)			
country	year	turnout	change	country	year	turnout	change
Netherlands	1971	79.1	-15.9	United Kingdom	1950	83.6	+11
France	1981	70.9	-11.9	Finland	1962	85.1	+10.1
France	1988	66.2	-12.3	France	1967	81.1	+12.4
United Kingdom	2001	59.4	-12.1	Cyprus	1981	95.8	+10.5
Cyprus	2011	78.7	-10.3	Spain	1982	79.8	+11.7
Cyprus	2016	66.7	-12				

Among the three *restrictive electoral revolutions* in Western Europe, seeking country variation means choosing either the Dutch election of 1971, where compulsory voting was dropped, and the British election of 2001. Picking the latter guarantees temporal variation, since the *expansive* European case is from 1967. As for the two consecutive *restrictive electoral revolutions* in the 2011 and 2016 Cypriot elections, they are treated as "shadow cases" in the conclusion given their exceptionality. Overall, the choice of France and the United Kingdom as the two European cases guarantees a certain degree of variation in national institutions, party system and political praxis. Temporal variation among the cases also acts as a natural control on different models of party organization, membership and mobilization. Party organization was arguably more oriented to in-person events in 1960s France, even if the importance of mass-media was already very high, in comparison to 1990s Britain where the main actors could all be classified as television-parties.

TABLE 1.4 – ELECTORAL REVOLUTIONS, LATIN AMERICA (1945-2016)							
restrictive (ΔT<-10%)				expansive (ΔT<-10%)			
country	year	turnout	change	country	year	turnout	change
Brazil	1950	71.9	**-13.8**	Colombia	1947	56.4	18
Mexico	1952	74.2	-15.6	Ecuador	1954	81.6	20.9
Honduras	1954	61.4	-24.6	Brazil	1958	92	26.5
Guatemala	1959	44.6	-22.3	Costa Rica	1962	80.9	16.2
Colombia	1960	57.8	**-11.1**	Bolivia	1964	91.9	15.9
Brazil	1962	79.6	**-12.4**	Honduras	1965	75.3	**11.8**
Colombia	1964	36.9	-21	Guatemala	1966	55	**10.5**
Colombia	1978	33.4	-23.7	Colombia	1970	51.9	**14.6**
Mexico	1979	49.4	**-10.9**	Uruguay	1971	91.9	17.6
Bolivia	1980	74.3	-16.2	El Salvador	1972	56.7	**15**
Panama	1984	68.9	**-14.7**	Mexico	1982	72.6	**10.6**
Mexico	1988	49.4	-23.2	Brazil	1986	95	**12.7**
Guatemala	1990	56.4	**-12.8**	Nicaragua	1990	86.3	**10.9**
Peru	1990	68.1	**-11.7**	Colombia	1990	55.3	**11.7**
Colombia	1991	36.5	-18.8	Paraguay	1993	66.2	**14.2**
El Salvador	1991	52.9	-14.8	Dominican Rep.	1994	87.6	27.7
Venezuela	1993	60	-21.7	Mexico	1994	77.7	28.3
Honduras	1993	65	**-11**	Guatemala	1995	46.8	25.8
Guatemala	1994	21	-35.4	Colombia	1998	45.7	**13.3**
El Salvador	1997	39.2	-15.9	Paraguay	1998	80.5	**14.3**
Dominican Rep.	1998	53	-34.6	Peru	2000	82	**14.9**
Costa Rica	1998	70	**-11.1**	Guatemala	2003	54.5	**14.1**
Mexico	2000	57.2	-20.5	Bolivia	2005	84.5	**12.4**
Paraguay	2003	64	-16.5	Bolivia	2009	94.6	**10.1**
Mexico	2003	41.7	-16	El Salvador	2009	52.8	**11.4**
Honduras	2005	46	-20.3	Nicaragua	2011	73.9	**12.7**
Nicaragua	2006	61.2	**-12**	Honduras	2013	61.2	**11.1**
Chile	2013	49.4	-38.3	Dominican Rep.	2016	67.8	**11.4**

Conversely, Latin America, a region characterized by recent (re)democratization and a mix of more and less institutionalized party systems, offers more turnout volatility. This naturally results in more frequent *electoral revolutions* – as Table 1.4 shows in the next page – often happening in the same country. In such a context, an *expansive electoral revolution* happening in a period of contested democratization would be typical, while a recent *restrictive electoral revolution* in a more stable and institutionalized political systems would be more atypical. Seeking some comparability with the European cases, bring the case selection among *electoral revolutions* with ±10-15% turnout variation (bold in table 1.4).

Excluding extreme cases also avoids elections tainted by suspicions of electoral fraud or where compulsory voting requirements were suddenly dropped, widening the pool of potential voters.

Out of the 28 *restrictive* cases in Latin America (Table 1.4), 11 qualify as belonging to the 10-15% range. Excluding elections under a dominant party system (e.g. Mexico before 1996), or taking place under transitions to democracy (e.g. Panama, Guatemala), leaves several options. Costa Rica in 1998 is of substantive importance for having taken place the most stable party system and democracy in Central America. It is an extremely interesting case because it saw the internal transformation in the two main political parties and the presence of a massive public banking scandal. This resulted in a *restrictive electoral revolution* of dramatic proportions, with a deterioration of the ideological positioning of the main parties which makes it similar to the one that took place in the United Kingdom in 2001.

As for the 28 Latin American instances of *expansive electoral revolution*, 19 included variations in the +10-15% range and were considered for selection. Again, I excluded cases from the turbulent period of regional transition to democracy (1980-1990). This left several more recent elections, some of which saw contested dominant-party consolidation (Bolivia) or political systems with extreme exclusionary dynamics (Guatemala). I chose the Honduran election of 2013 because it marked the opening of a very institutionalized party-system, making it more similar to the European cases, and to Costa Rica. This made it the most appropriate subject for a fourth in-depth case study, which completed the case selection.

Both of the chosen *restrictive* cases of *electoral revolution*, Britain in 2001 and Costa Rica in 1998, show party system deterioration. At the same time, they saw a loss of confidence in state institutions and a consequent disengagement of the population towards the democratic process in the lead-up to the election. Both of the *expansive* cases of *electoral revolution*, France in 1967 and Honduras in 2013, constitute clear examples of positive party system transformations. During the time between two consecutive elections, the main parties in the country reinforced their position in the society, and a new phase in the democratic life of the country was inaugurated. Their correspondence to dramatic increases in voter turnout makes them even more comparable cases, in spite of the geographic and temporal differences among them.

1.5 – Plan of the book

After this introduction, *Chapter II* contains a detailed explanation of the theoretical framework and the empirical methodology. The following four chapters are this work's core, and show the temporal evolution of different aspects of the political context in the four cases of electoral revolution. Changes in competition occupy *Chapters III, IV and V*, respectively focused on the majority, the opposition, and the polarization of the party system, while *Chapter VI* follows national-level changes in institutional credibility. The conclusion connects these different aspects, and offers suggestions for future research.

Chapter II presents and operationalizes the conceptual components of credibility and competition within a theoretical framework. In particular, factors linked to competition are divided into three broad areas centered around the majority, the opposition and party system polarization, each of which is assigned a number of theoretical mechanisms. Credibility is then operationalized as having seven main components. The following part describes an empirical model of social reality based on how focusing events work in reorienting political discourse. Last, a methodological section addresses the selection of newspaper articles and the qualitative coding, including a series of considerations regarding its validity in connecting individual and aggregate plans.

Given the large span covered by this work, between *Chapters II* and *III*, a description of the national institutions and party systems of France, Honduras, Costa Rica and the United Kingdom during the periods examined serves as an introduction to the cases.

Chapter III is the first dealing with changes in political competition. It focuses on the events shaping the trajectory of the majority party/coalition before an electoral revolution, in the four cases. The importance of the majority's strength and cohesion depends upon whether there was a gap before the election, i.e. if the incumbent could count on a position of strength. If the majority had a large initial advantage, then it needed weakening to lead to a more competitive election, while with a smaller advantage, its weakening did not need to be as pronounced. On the other side, a weak majorities seem a prerequisite for negative electoral revolutions, regardless of the opposition's performance.

Chapter IV examines the opposition parties. It is more straightforward since the opposition seems to behave coherently across electoral revolutions. The strengthening of opposition parties tends to galvanize citizens resulting in increased electoral mobilization, whereas the creation of a weak or divided opposition stifles electoral participation. For

expansive cases, the creation of political alliances between or within opposition parties had a positive role.

Chapter V treats changing ideological polarization. In general, increased/decreased ideological differentiation is visible in the years preceding both *expansive* and *restrictive electoral revolutions*. In particular, this chapter bridges the findings of the previous two chapters regarding party systems by looking at the majority and the opposition jointly.

Chapter VI examines all factors linked to credibility. Public opinion impressions of national institutions appear as the clearest determinant behind cases of electoral revolutions. Corruption scandals and failed/lacking institutional reforms, in particular, have a decisive role for *restrictive* electoral revolutions. In contrast with the framework's theorization, I find that public protests appear to be a complement, not a substitute, of electoral mobilization. Last, the national economy seems to be completely independent from electoral mobilization, as it differs across cases without a clear pattern.

Chapter VIII outlines the key contributions of this study and offers a series of conclusive remarks, policy recommendations around parties and elections, and suggestions for future research. Most importantly, it uses categories of recurring events to trace connections between the different elements that were presented separately for analytical purposes across chapters *III-VI*.

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

The first chapter defined *electoral revolutions* and grounded them in an empirical universe of cases, choosing four for lengthy examination. Before moving to the empirical chapters, four sections outline this work's theoretical and methodological underpinnings. The first theoretically conceptualizes the determinants of rapid changes in voter turnout. The second proposes a model of the social world that allows for rapid changes in political institutions. The third responds to the need for a social-scientific methodological procedure suited to this study. These specifications and form the backbone of the *Mediated Event Theory Analysis* (*META*) proposed in the fourth and last part.

To address voter turnout changes, the **theoretical** component of *META* unpacks a country's political context through an adaptable and capacious gaze. The introduction linked the existence of *electoral revolutions* to rapid transformations in political credibility and competition. A slate of more specific analytical mechanisms expands upon these two broad conceptual categories to trace connections between specific aspects of political context and voters' perception of the national politics. First, I connected the mechanisms to transformations in the party system, national political institutions, the economy and public protests. Then, the mechanisms' classification depended upon whether they potentially transformed credibility and competition through the majority, the opposition, party system polarization or national institutions. Last, a broad framework organizes the mechanisms, with the purpose of facilitating the future study of electoral participation.

The **eventful** component of *META* follows. As rapid changes of participation, *electoral revolutions* are situated in a social world where discourse and agency can transform political institutions. Crucially, these transformations happen through the unfolding of temporal processes, and become evident at specific breaking points. This is because this work explains *electoral revolutions*, alterations in voters' otherwise stable habits, with changes in political institutions, usually seen as structural elements. I argue that critical/focusing/salient events act as the catalyst through which significant discursive transformations of institutions materialize.

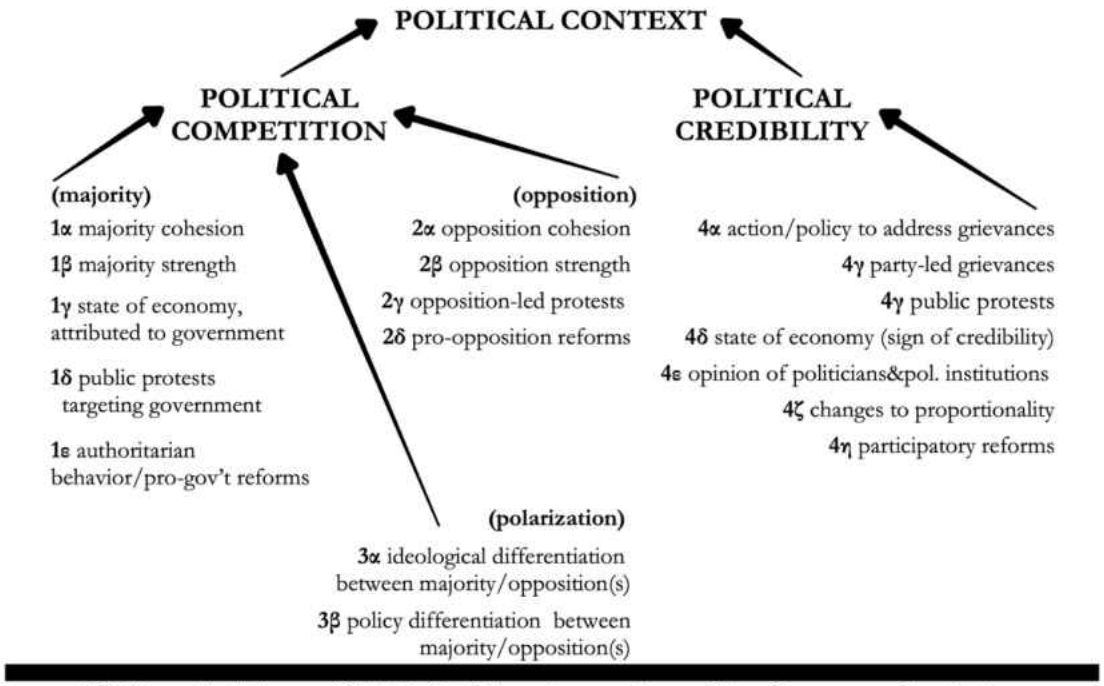
Then comes the **mediated** component, which allows to observe these phenomena. Operationally, the transformation of the credibility and competition discourse follows the evolution of specific mechanisms. To this end, a detailed qualitative codebook assigns a

coding to each mechanism in the theoretical framework. The epistemological impossibility of observing all political discourse motivates the search for a more manageable object of inquiry. A focus on national media with large audiences is well-suited for capturing the *communicative* discourse that connects politicians and the general public. All case studies apply qualitative coding to samples of newspaper articles, allowing to reconstruct the evolution of political discourse at single-mechanism and at aggregate level.

Last, the **analytical** component of *META* compares the trajectories that political discourse took in the cases. It then evaluates the presence and effect of different mechanisms on rapid changes of voter turnout. A combination of consistent and coherent mechanisms across cases, results in a theory of *electoral revolutions*, also applies to electoral participation at large, even in cases of turnout stability. The chapter ends with an outline of the four cases of electoral revolution in France, the United Kingdom, Costa Rica and Honduras. A preview of the results from the empirical chapters follows the framework's division between competition and to credibility-related aspects. In sum, this chapter contains all the specifications of the research, both at a general and a particular level.

2.1 – Theoretical Framework

FIGURE 2.1 – PRESENTATION OF ALL THEORETICAL MECHANISMS



NOTE: empirical chapters (Ch.3-4-5-6) will be each centered one of these four groups of mechanisms

Figure 2.1 offers a visual representation of the capacious theoretical framework used to decompose a country's political context. As presented in the introduction, it is split between competition-related and credibility-related components. Competition lies in the power relationship between the government and the opposition (structure of the political offer), and their ideological and policy-based polarization (diversity of the political offer), while credibility is the perceived legitimacy of national institutions and citizens' ease of political access. Following Ostrom's (2010) use of *theory* and *framework*, a specific hypothesis rules how each component creates change in voter turnout. The labels assigned to each mechanism include a number to separate them into four macro-areas (government, opposition, polarization, credibility), and a Greek letter to differentiate within them.

2.1.1 – Roots of Competition: The Party System

Due to their importance to electoral competition, the voter turnout literature often looks at party systems separately from other factors. Sartori (1976) defines a party system as a "system of interactions resulting from inter-party competition" since "each party is a function [...] of the others and reacts" to their actions. Political competition is usually divided between two components: the structure of the political offer, expressed through the uncertainty of the electoral outcomes, and the differentiation of the party system, stemming from the *median voter theorem*. Within the scholarship on voting, an early behavioral tradition has evaluated the significance of different party-system-related components. In particular, the impact of the number of parties depends upon the electoral system (Duverger, 1951), and it overlaps with the margin of victory, because the effective number of parties (Laakso and Taagepera, 1979) shrinks when larger parties are stronger (Grofman & Selb, 2011). The impact of competition and of the number of parties seems mostly limited to *SMD* systems (Stockemer, 2014) and the relationship is generally quadratic, with "too many parties" damaging turnout (Taagepera, Selb and Grofman, 2014).

On the other hand, the importance of party system differentiation comes from the assumption that in single-member-districts competition concentrates in the ideological center (Downs, 1957). Its implications are tested by observing how the ideological/policy positions of parties/candidates interact with voting decisions. Recent statistical evidence is contradictory, as a higher number of parties in a voter's ideological area seems beneficial

for turnout (Vassil et al., 2016), but increasing turnout can also be measured in parts of the ideological spectrum with less parties (Rodón, 2017). Therefore, some conclude that ideological closeness and turnout might be linked only in some elections, depending on the current political context (Lefkoridi et al., 2014). Importantly, another recent study (Robbins and Hunter, 2011) complements these finding to show that people vote more where party-share replacement and volatility are low, that is, where in the absence of big shocks to credibility and competition.

The recent quantitative literature has recognized existing issues in finding an appropriate operationalization of political competition, since voters decide whether to go to the polls without directly observing real competition levels. Using the margin of the winning party/coalition from election results as a proxy for competition generates an *attenuation bias* which distorts OLS estimators (Garmann, 2014). Alternatively, polled intentions of vote systematically over-report voter turnout, because people want to appear dutiful. Different numbers of relevant parties make also it hard to compare competition levels for different countries, as victory margins work best in two-party elections under first-past-the-post. Therefore, a new conceptualization of electoral uncertainty is necessary, following different competition-related mechanisms, which are divided into three categories linked to: (1) the parliamentary majority, (2) the opposition, and (3) party system polarization. This division uses the simple idea that competition is higher when the perceived gap between government and opposition is smaller, and when they look more different in policy-related, or ideological terms.

For competition to grow, the incumbent government must not become too powerful, otherwise the it will likely maintain power in the following election. This is coded as **strength of the majority**, which can be observed through pre-electoral polls, good handling of complex events, resources under their command (**μ1β**), and **cohesion**, or unity (**μ1α**) inside the government cabinet and the parliamentary coalition. All things equal, it is assumed that these mechanisms negatively affect voter turnout, as they widen the gap with the rest of the party system. The converse then applies to the opposition, which needs strength (**μ2α**) and cohesion (**μ2β**) to challenge the current government. Both of them increase competition.[3] The importance of powerful oppositions for participation is actually valid even beyond democratic elections (Frantz, 2018). Last, the polarization of the political system should, *ceteris paribus*, increase competition by improving the structure

[3] A conceptual caveat: when the opposition massively overpowers the government, that might reduce competition, and hence turnout.

of the political offer. Differentiation can exist in **ideological** terms (**μ3α**), or disagreement around societal principles, and in terms of **policy agenda differentiation** (**μ1β)**, or disagreement as to how to achieve political or economic outcomes.

2.1.2 – Roots Of Credibility: Political Institutions

The discourse around the evaluation of political institutions is the most important mechanism connecting them to voter turnout, and contains judgement values on their effectiveness, worth and credibility. This is germane to the idea of *external efficacy*, which captures the beliefs on the responsiveness of the political system to the electorate (Caul and Anderson, 2011), and to the logical finding that perceptions of electoral integrity positively affect voter turnout (Birch, 2010). At community level, consider Anderson's (1998) argument, based on Turner's et al. (1987) assessment that communities tend to associate themselves with positively valued symbols and dissociate from negative symbols. Anderson maintains that when politics shifts from being positively valued (concerned with issues) to being negatively valued (just a "horse race"), those who had adopted political participation as a positive marker, will drop voting from their self-defined identity. This is also similar to the process for how the autonomy of election management bodies influences public trust in elections (Kerr and Lührmann, 2017).

Therefore, the mechanism is quite simple: a loss of trust in institutions makes some people stop voting, while others will start voting when they feel that institutions have become more transparent, democratic, responsive. Generally, then, corruption, lack of efficacy, and dissatisfaction with current political institutions all are expected to negatively impact credibility, and therefore depress electoral participation (**μ4ε**). An opposite, positive effect on participation activates when the dominant discourse portrays national political institutions as representative, efficient, transparent. This travels beyond strictly political organs such as parliaments and high courts, but applies to extensions of the state such as the police, whose evaluation contributes to how the national institutions are seen (Walker and Waterman, 2008). While the mechanism is all-encompassing in this sense, the evaluation of credibility in the empirical section necessarily has to differentiate between different components.

Other credibility-linked institutional elements that influence voter turnout work through the proportionality of the electoral system (Gallagher, 1991), the presence of compulsory voting (Singh, 2011; Hill, 2011), and the strictness of the requirements for participating in the election. More generally, changes to any form of access to the election directly impact the credibility of the process, and are assigned a specific mechanism (**μ4η**). Another credibility component is related to public policy at large (**μ4α**). When the state apparatus appears able to address the public's issues and needs, it positively contributes to creating a credible image of national politics (Anderson, 1998). This component needs to be carefully separated from a discourse touting the current government's achievements, or criticizing its failures, or inaction, which relates to competition (government strength, **μ1β)**. Differentiating between these two discourses is easy in practice, as in one case achievements are generically attributed to the administration or the state, while in the other, explicitly mentions majority parties and politicians.

2.1.3 – Economic Voting

The link between institutional credibility and electoral participation also works through economic, or *performance* voting. This incorporates public finance correlates of voting, which also affect the government's evaluation. Evidence regarding turnout's relationship with economic performance is inconclusive, and no consensus (Lewis-Beck & Stiegmaier 2000) exists over whether voting depends upon economic changes affecting the whole society (*sociotropic*), or those that affect one's household (*egotropic*). Rowe (2016) also lamented the scarce attention to economic factors in studies of voter turnout, since most studies of economic voting are limited to its influence on party performance. Moreover, defining precisely the *state of the economy* has proved arduous since the interpretation of economic facts is frequently contested (Keech, 1996; Anderson, 2007). Luckily, economic evaluations of a current government are prominent in political discourse. Within this study's framework, the economic components (GDP growth, inflation, unemployment…) are conceptualized in two ways. They can affect voter turnout through competition, by strengthening (weakening) the government when good (bad) national economic performance is attributed to its policy and actions (**μ1γ**). On the other hand, a positive (negative) state of the economy could positively affect credibility by improving (damaging) citizens' image of the country (**μ4δ**). Once again, for coding purposes, these discourse

threads will often be both present during the same days, with media bits generally focusing on one or the other.

2.1.4 – Protests and Social Movements

Public protests, striking workers, or social movements also impact credibility and competition. As recently as 2010, Tarrow and McAdam lamented the absence of joint studies of elections and public protests, and proposed that protests can foster turnout by increasing political mobilization and internal party polarization. The antagonistic, unconventional nature of protests makes them a salient element of the electoral context. Several studies look at turnout and public protests in parallel, but mostly overlook their interactions (Lewis-Beck & Lockerbie, 1989; Bernhagen and Marsh, 2007; Brown et al., 2011), with two notable exceptions. Booysen (2007) and Galais (2014) respectively show in their studies of S.Africa and Spain that public protests do not depress turnout, as protesters tend to vote more. Within this work, public protests are a separate component assigned two different mechanisms, depending on whether they have a government target. On one side, they are detrimental to national institutions' credibility when they denounce the incapacity of the state apparatus to meet citizens' needs (**μ4γ**). On the other hand, they impact competition when aimed against the current government, thus reinforcing competition (**μ1δ**).

2.1.5 – Accounting for overlap and the individual level

Last, the framework's components can overlap, as political competition and institutional credibility are related. It would be unrealistic to assume that corruption scandals do not affect party systems, to consider the ideological positioning of a government coalition unrelated to the economic outlook, or to imagine sustained public protests that do not orient parliamentary debate. Credibility allows for fair competition, a perception of political illegitimacy often correlates with a dominant political party, and a highly competitive party system can enhance political credibility. In this vein, Franklin (2004) successfully used the examples of falling turnout in Switzerland, where a cartelized

party system damaged credibility, and high turnout in Malta, where a vibrant two-party competition led to credibility. At the same time, this is not a deterministic relationship and the two concepts are analytically separate. For example, the 2016 U.S. Presidential election was certainly competitive, but the credibility of political institutions was low. The converse is also true, as some scarcely competitive elections enjoyed high credibility, such as Ronald Reagan's 1984 landslide. Another important remark is that political system's credibility is also independent from the electoral system's proportionality. PR systems are seen as more competitive because they allow more parties to sit in Parliament, but any number of parties can result in low competition, since government formation is a winner-takes-all game. Interactions and overlap are reexamined in the conclusion, building upon the evidence presented in the empirical chapters.

The last step after examining this conceptual model of reality is ask: what insures that these aggregate factors work at voters' individual level? As mentioned in the introduction, the perceived stability of turnout depends upon a habit of voting across the electorate. Crucially, though, Aldrich (2011) notes that "*repetition of voting does not indicate that a strong habit has been formed unless it has been done in a very similar context*". In other words, events that significantly alter a voter's context can break consolidated voting habits. This observation explains why moving to a new neighborhood or town reduces the likelihood of voting. The literature also shows that voters respond to social pressure (Gerber et al., 2008) regardless of community size (Panagopoulos, 2011). Similarly, deteriorating health is a strong deterrent towards voting (Rapeli et al., 2018), and so is the onset of depression (Ojeda and Pacheco, 2017). Poor health, depression or moving houses are factors that "break the habit" since voting is a social behavior, chosen as we feel part of a community (Blais, 2001), not isolated. In addition, we also know that insignificant, contingent, non-political events affect voting behavior by changing the thoughts and mood of those involved, such as the college football games that Healy and al. (2010) used for their notorious elaboration. This study extends these findings by claiming that national institutions, including the party system, are as important as one's neighborhood or personal health to a voter's political context, with the important difference that they extend to the whole electorate and not just a portion of it. When events significantly alter the general perception of credibility and competition of national politics, they act as an exogenous displacement of all voters' context. The aggregate outcome of these transformations are the fluctuations we observe in voter turnout. To continue with the analogy of moving houses, note that most people who move still vote, as only some of them are affected. The

same happens in *electoral revolutions*, as many still hang on to their voting or abstention habits, while a very sizable proportion of the electorate changes its behavior.

2.2 – Empirical Model of Social Reality

As said in the introduction, this work claims that the dramatic changes in voters' behavior observed in *electoral revolutions* depend upon rapid institutional transformations which reshape credibility and competition. It is therefore naturally rooted in an institutionalist approach to political science. Just like any other social scientific endeavor, it needs a suitable model of social reality to appropriately answer a research question. In this respect, my perspective is firmly within the confines of *discursive institutionalism* (Schmidt, 2008). Putting aside the need to explain social reality through set preferences, self-reinforcing historical paths, or all-defining cultural norms, discursive institutionalism simultaneously considers political institutions as orderly structures and social constructs dependent upon agents' articulation of ideas and discourse. The electoral studies subfield's inability to explain fast changes in participation is endemic to political science, with researchers often forced to explain rapid transformations through exogenous factors that temporarily break structural equilibria. *Discursive institutionalism* is an appealing alternative to traditional approaches because it is better equipped to consider change as endogenous.

Importantly, Schmidt divides political discourse between a *coordinative* form, where political actors compete to define ideas in their inner circle, and a *communicative* form occurring in the public sphere. Since this study investigates massive changes in public behavior, any relevant transformation occurs through the *communicative* form of discourse, which includes all individuals and groups involved in the deliberation, legitimation and presentation of political ideas to the general public. Going beyond the state, it involves the opposition parties, the media, pundits, community leaders, social advocates and more (Schmidt, ibid.) The general public also contributes and its opinion is represented through polls and interviews. Empirical research can adopt this model of reality and look at a sufficiently large slice of the discourse directed to the general public. The reconstruction of a series of salient events – those that most of the electorate would know about – constitutes evidence of political discourse transformations between two elections.

Since events of national resonance, framed discursively through the media, have the power to transform public perceptions of credibility and competition, they are the broader conceptual unit of this study. Borrowing from William Sewell (1996), events are "*sequences of occurrences that result in the transformation of structures*". Salient events have the persistency and coherence to alter discourse significantly in a positive or a negative direction. This has material, concrete repercussions on institutions and political parties. Think about a general party assembly or a corruption scandal, either of which may become discursively framed in a negative light. In the short run these events often produce minor transformations, such as lowering the approval of a party in the next round of opinion polls. Consider then what happens if talk about an event lasts for weeks and lingers within the public opinion, if it triggers a fight between party members of national renown, or if it happens right before a round of municipal elections. Then it might damage a party's electoral performance, hurt its membership figures, limit its parliamentary strength, stifle its donations, all of which have serious material consequences beyond mere *discourse*. A single article reporting on a specific occurrence has little weight, with many bound to just cancel each other out, as positive and negative commentaries get explained away as small exceptions that reinforce the status quo (Sewell, ibid.) Yet, some events generate discursive threads powerful enough to shift political discourse for weeks or months, with a select few shifting it for years.

The use of events in political science is confined to specific subfields, lagging behind fellow disciplines such as anthropology. One notable exception is the public policy scholarship, where events are powerful engines of the policy process. Special attention is devoted to *focusing* events, capable of altering the dominant issues in an agenda or policy domain, or directly connected to group mobilization and attempts to expand/contain issues (Birkland, 1998). More recently, a study of the first *Intifada* characterized "focusing events" as those receiving intensive, substantive and relatively sustained public attention (Alimi & Maney, 2018). Event production is seen as rooted in a dialogical procedure that treats discourse as an ongoing process of social communication and considers interpretations and meaning-making as relationally embedded in actual situations and social contexts (Tilly, 1998). The study of cabinet terminations in parliamentary regimes sparked a similar attention to *critical* events broadly defined as shifts in electoral prospects (Browne et al., 1986; Diermeyer and Stevenson, 2000). For example, to observe how party systems change over time, we rely upon events such as public opinion shocks that can alter the seat distribution in parliament when a new election is called (Laver and Shepsle, 1998).

In this study, contradictory and cumulative effects of large and small events on political discourse are considered for the whole period, not just during campaigns. This is because everything matters, not just *focusing* or *critical* events. Scholars are drawn to salient events because they offer less controversial evidence that reorients the discourse in a more powerful way. Here, instead of relying upon pre-made lists of important events compiled by journalists or pundits, the selection of relevant events is made ex-post. In other words, it does not precede the analysis, but follows the empirical examination of the political process between two elections. The criterion for establishing which events are salient for credibility and competition is sustained and consistently positive or negative coverage. For this purpose, the methodological section adopts a threshold for measurement.

2.3 – Methodological Approach

Now that the framework accounts for temporality, this section formulates the methodological approach. Given how "*citizens in large societies are dependent on unseen and unusually unknown others for most of their information about the larger world in which they live*" (Zaller, 1992) the national media emerged as an appropriate source of material. Under democracy the media follow political campaigns with an almost morbid attention, to the point of having been blamed for creating a sport-like perception of *elections as a race* (Dunaway & Lawrence, 2015). The media's role in shaping political information for voters crucially encompasses exposure to the incumbent's policy agenda (Matsubayashi and Wu, 2012) and affects the public's voting decisions. In concrete terms, for each of the four case studies a prominent national diffusion newspaper constitutes the main source for *communicative* discourse. Newspapers are also considered more politically informative than, for example, television (Gentzkow, 2006). Additionally, studies found no evidence of positive or negative newspaper readership effects on voter turnout (Gerber et al., 2009; Brynin and Newton, 2003), which makes them the media most akin to raw data.

Newspapers report how focusing events reshape political discourse, but is the electorate actually paying attention? Recent research (Forrest and Marks, 1999; Dalton, 2006) has reversed the longstanding assumption that late deciders (the so-called *campaign deciders*) are generally inattentive to political information (Campbell et al., 1960). If it is not just partisans who know whether and how they will vote, but late deciders also gather

political data for voting purposes, all information presented between two elections is salient to collective turnout decisions. Since this study mainly captures the effect of national events that no large diffusion newspaper could ignore, the choice depended upon circulation. The newspaper sources for the four cases were not only nationally prominent, but also chosen to avoid bias in a direction problematic for this work's validity. The choice fell upon *Le Monde* for France, *the Daily Mail* for Britain, *La Nación* for Costa Rica, and *La Prensa* for Honduras. It was important to exclude material that would exaggerate changing credibility and competition in a direction conducive to an positive or negative electoral revolution. So for France and Honduras the sources did not overemphasize the opposition's growth, while those for Costa Rica and Britain did not portray the majority as overly strong.

The material collected starts the day after "*election A*", until the day of "*election B*", the one where the electoral revolution materialized. The newspapers' format and availability influenced the technique for selecting the relevant material. For France and Great Britain, sources were fully available online in plain text. For Honduras, an archive was partially available online. For Costa Rica it was completely unavailable online, so the sources was accessed physically in the archive of the *Biblioteca Nacional* of San José. For the two countries with all articles published in the years between the two elections, I developed a systematic way to select the relevant material based on the R package for *structural topic modelling*, or *STM* (Lucas et al. 2015). *STM* is a series of commands created for finding the main topics inside a body of texts by calculating the frequency of words and distance between them. Upon coding a *STM*-based program specifically designed for this study, the program finds the most prominent clusters of words in a body of texts, which can then be examined to determine the different discourses that they represent.

In practice, the program returns a spreadsheet where each row contains a cluster of related words. Given how broad-diffusion national newspapers always include political discourse, one of the main topics always contains the words "*party*", "*government*", "*politician*"" and well-known political surnames. After selecting the cluster concerning political parties and institutions, one can export a set number of articles most correlated with that word cluster, which constitutes the relevant sample. Since the material is a text-only mass archive of articles divided by year, where first page cover stories and small notes appear as equivalent, two rounds of selection were necessary. The first selected the political cluster, then the second ran a second *structural topic model* on a set number of articles in the political cluster, and extracted articles from the three most present sub-clusters within the

larger block. This double procedure ensures that the articles in each year's final sample covered salient political themes. This came at the cost of erasing some events that used language that diverged from the rest of the political discourse for a specific year.

For the two countries where *STM* could not be used all articles with national-level political content were selected manually. For Costa Rica, access to the complete archive of *La Nación* resulted in a large sample. For Honduras, the only form of access was *Wayback Machine*'s spotty internet archive, which only included some days for *La Prensa*, offering a random selection which put available coverage was outside the researcher's control. After creating a case-specific sample, I coded all articles for the presence of discursive mechanisms from the theoretical framework. As specified in section 2.1, a specific hypothesis rules each mechanism's impact on turnout. Similar to coding for Congressional witness testimonies as supportive or unsupportive of public policy (Birkland, 1998), each article can be coded for a positive or negative effect through a mechanism related to credibility or competition. Using single articles as unit of observation has the additional advantage of reducing complexity, as in most instances, the title and lead set an article's tone and mood, allowing to easily assign a specific code (Kubis and Howland, 1985; Garrison, 2009). Whenever the message aligns with a discursive mechanism in the framework, the article can be coded. This methodology allows for immersion into the lines of political discourse present between two elections. It also eliminates preliminary interference from academic secondary sources that reinterpreted and selected the events *ex-post*.[4] Newspaper material generally does not contain high amounts of reflection, and most importantly does not have the benefit of hindsight in regards to the evolution of current events, including an election's turnout and winners.

This methodology is also consistent with a growing body of research showing that negative coverage of candidates affects voter turnout in a positive (Djupe & Peterson, 2002) or negative sense (Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1994). More recent work (Krupnikov, 2011; 2014) focuses on timing and on the necessity of a previous candidate choice for negative coverage to depress turnout. The adoption of a qualitative codebook with guidelines and examples for all mechanisms guarantees homogeneity in the analysis of

[4] Even if this section focuses on *communicative* (public) aspects of discourse, Schmidt's *coordinative* discourse and the structural factors underlying the cases need unpacking. Luckily, material following the evolution of a country's politics before an election abounds. Overlooked by the comparative scholarship on elections, single-election monographs and secondary sources such as political magazines, governmental publications are written for national audiences. Here, they provide a background for the case studies, by defining the prevalent patterns, norms and public interests of the periods under consideration. This vast literature also made unnecessary the collection of primary sources (e.g. internal party documents). Importantly, Sewell claims that historical events must have been recognized as notable by their contemporaries. Therefore, this work relies upon publications contemporary or close in time to the periods covered.

different cases. The coding all political articles published, or of a representative sub-sample, leads to the coding of large swaths of non-salient material (Shaw, 1999). Nevertheless, avoiding an *a priori* selection of *focusing* events preserves all the noise and contradicting signals that people experience in the real world. All articles form part of the general discourse and their cumulative impact matters.

This chapter also assesses the mechanisms' performance, since some might not be present and their utility is therefore questionable. Of course, the chosen methodology (qualitative coding of media) might not appropriate to capture a specific factor, which may be observed otherwise. Alternatively, the mechanism may be absent because it is actually unrelated to cases of *electoral revolution*. Then, the results are presented in two different and complementary modalities. First, a series of graphs and tables show the presence, frequency and change in the different mechanisms. Then, narrative accounts show events' transformative power to reconfigure party system equilibria and discourse concerning national institutions. In addition, a content analysis of media sources captures some phenomena that a quantitative regression-based approach misses. This is the case of the internal cohesion of government and opposition parties/coalitions, which, taken for granted in the era of the mass party, has been called into question after the advent of the catch-all party (Katz and Mair, 1995). Internal debate, once happening mostly behind closed doors, is now publicly constituted and communicated (Shenhav and Sheafer, 2008).

Alas, one cannot count on the material being completely unbiased. Every media source establishes the attributes of the news coverage such as visibility, prominence, gravitas and attention span (Alimi and Maney 2018). This said, there is evidence that today's political parties' "agenda-building" efforts (Weaver, 2015) have more influence on the media agenda than vice-versa (Hopmann et al., 2012), with larger parties being on average more influential. On the other hand, the media often misrepresent campaign platforms, and pledges of economic nature receive more space (Kostadinova, 2017). Fortunately, newspaper editors did not publish the articles in the samples with credibility and competition in mind, so bias is often accidental and does not affect temporal variations. In addition, any wide-distribution media reports on *critical* or *focusing* events, which are fundamental for the turnout outcome. A focus upon critical junctures in political discourse between two elections, and not merely on its overall positive or negative orientation, leaves less room for partisan bias to skew the findings. Last, a case comparison under different media environments, and the open acknowledgement of bias enhance the results' validity.

For example, using the *Daily Mail* to cover the first Blair government (1997-2001), guarantees a harsh treatment of the *Labour* party. Given that the British election of 2001 was a negative *electoral revolution*, a certain kind of evidence would go along with the theory. Ideally, to support this work's hypotheses, one would like to show how the government grew stronger than the opposition between 1997 and 2001, while the credibility of the political system shrank. In this case, a bias against Blair's majority can be seen as an extra hurdle, since it probably slightly increased the number of articles depicting the *Labour* party as weak or divided. The same is true about the use of *La Prensa* in Honduras, where the media barons certainly did not see with sympathy the incredible rise of a new partisan opposition. And yet, that is the evidence needed to show that competition grew in the lead-up to the *positive electoral* revolution of 2013. Similarly, *Le Monde* could not be accused of pro-Communist tendencies in the 1960s, and *La Nación* did not favor the *Partido Liberación Nacional* during the 1990s. This is to show how the study does not overlook bias in the sources, but openly discusses it.

In the following pages Tables 2.1 and 2.2 show a simplified version of the qualitative codebook for all mechanisms, including positive and negative examples of coded text. In practice, the article samples for each case study are in chronological order, going from the previous election (or *election A*) to the election when the electoral revolution took place (or *election B*). When an article reflects a positive or negative assessment of a certain discourse, it receives the coding for a specific mechanism, or if it does not fit within any of them it is left uncoded. A "time marker" is also kept through a simple sum which increases by 1 for each new article in the sample. As the coding proceeds, a log keeps track of 21 separate counters for each of the 17 mechanisms and 4 groups, to allow for a raw quantitative assessment of changes in the discourse over time. An article coded with a + for a certain mechanism adds 1 point to that mechanism's counter and also to the counter of the group that the mechanisms belongs to. For example, an article describing the opposition as cohesive increases the counter for opposition cohesion by 1, but also the overall counter for the opposition by 1. The assignment of a – code, subtracts 1 point from the counter for that mechanism and group. Doing so, as the coding proceeds in chronological order, the counter for a mechanism receiving more positive than negative coding increases, and in the opposite case it decreases. This simple technique has the advantage of offering an assessment of each mechanism and each case, independent from ex-post evaluations linked to more nuanced accounts of the events.

TABLE 2.1 : SIMPLIFIED CODEBOOK FOR ALL MECHANISMS

code	mechanism*	impact** on turnout [hypothesis]	topics of articles where this discursive mechanism can be found	examples*** of key words and reported behaviors
1α	**cohesion of majority**	–	the parliamentary majority, the parties that compose it, the executive, the president...	unity/division, criticism/praise or (dis)approval from within
1β	**strength of majority**	–		strong/weak, winning/losing, good/bad polling
1γ	**majority economic record**	–		good/bad, improving/worsening attributed to current govt
1δ	**anti-goverment protests**	+		grievances, unaddressed issues
1ε	**authoritarian majority**	–		control, authoritarianism
2α	**cohesion of opposition**	+	the parliamentary opposition, any parties or candidates that are not currently in government	unity/division, criticism/praise or (dis)approval from within
2β	**strength of opposition**	+		strong/weak, winning/losing, good/bad polling
2γ	**opposition-led protests**	+		politicians participation in social movements
2δ	**pro-opposition reforms**	+		policy with specific benefits
3α	**ideological polarization**	+	articles about political parties and their platforms	same/different, original/predictable
3β	**policy-based polarization**	+		
4α	**policy evaluation**	+	policy measures, creation of new institutions	solutions (or lack of) to current issues of the population
4β	**party-led grievances**	–	the parliamentary opposition (see 2αβγδ)	grievances/end of grievances, unaddressed issues, activism, rallies, participation outside of party system
4γ	**public protests**	–	trade unions, workers' strikes, social movements	
4δ	**state of the economy**	+	national economy, public debt, inflation, unemployment...	good/bad, improving/worsening, stagnant/buoying
4ε	**opinion of pol. institutions**	+	the Parliament, politicians at large, corruption scandals, public administration, public agencies...	approval/disapproval, support
4η	**participatory reforms**	+		democracy/authoritarianism, accessibillity of politics

NOTES

*all mechanisms can be coded positively or negatively, with no exclusions

** if the hypothesis of a mechanism's impact on turnout is a (+), it means that when the coding is applied positively it should increase turnout (stronger opposition, more polarization, better policy, better economy, credible institutions). The contrary is true for mechanisms that have a (–), as a stronger majority, public protests and continued grievances are supposed to depress turnout.

*** examples from the coded texts are included in the next table (2.3).

After coding of every case's sample, the counter for each mechanism and group corresponds to the difference between positively and negatively coded articles. Since the samples for the four case studies — and different years — contain varying numbers of articles, a yearly coefficient makes them comparable. It was calculated by dividing the

counter by the number of articles in the sample for a specific year (or year's fraction). Then, for the two cases which exceed four years (France, UK), the final value of each mechanism's coefficient is divided by the number of months in the sample and multiplied by 48 (4 years). Each mechanism's coefficient can hypothetically range from -4 (all sample articles are coded negatively for that mechanism) to +4 (all coded negatively). Real

TABLE 2.2 - EIGHT EXAMPLES OF CODING, SHOWING REAL APPLICATIONS OF THE CODEBOOK TO THE MEDIA SAMPLE

code	mechanism	sign	hypothesis	article title (*English translation, country, date*) and comment
1β	strength of majority *(negatively coded)*	−	*decreases competition by broadening the gap between the government and the opposition*	"Liberación dominará en provincias" *("Liberación will dominate in the provinces", Costa Rica, 5/1/1997)* Since Liberación was in government, an article predicting that the party would dominate the forthcoming provincial elections signaled majority strength, which reduced overall political competition and voter turnout.
		+	*increases competition by narrowing the gap between the government and the opposition*	"Exfiscal dice que inseguridad es culpa del Presidente" *("Former attorney says that insecurity is the President's fault", Hond., 4/12/2013)* Edmundo Orellana, former foreign and defense minister, directly blames the President for the escalation of violence, weakening the majority. A higher probability of electoral defeat increases competition and turnout.
2α	cohesion of opposition *(positively coded)*	+	*increases competition by making the opposition look like a united challenger*	"La Fédération souhaite l'union de toutes les forces de gauche" *(The Federation wishes for the unity of all forces of the left, France, 14 Jan 1967)* After signing the alliance between Communists and Socialists, the Federation of the Left encouraged other leftist parties to join. A united left was a more solid opposition, increasing competition and turnout.
		−	*decreases competition by making the opposition look like a divided challenger*	"Howe Breaks Truce on Euro to Attack Hague" *(Great Britain, 3/19/1999)* Ex Secretary of State Lord Howe criticized Conservative leader William Hague on his stance towards the euro. It undermined party unity by creating perceived disagreement, hurting competition and voter turnout.
4γ	public protests *(negatively coded)*	−	*decreases credbility by showing that people are unhappy with the current situation*	"Maestros cumplen tres días en huelga de hambre" *("Teachers complete three days of hunger strike", Honduras, 5/8/2011)* Amidsts chaos in the Education ministry and lacking a new contract, teachers's protests, going as far as a hunger strike. The institutions' inability to provide for Hondurans hurt credibility and turnout.
		+	*increases credbility by showing a reached compromise, or lack of interest in protests*	"El fracaso de una huelga" *("The failure of a strike", Costa Rica, 24 May 1997)* Here a left-wing union (*FOL*) called for a solitary strike in the Institute of Electricity (*ICE*), then resorted to a small "march for dignity" to save face. A failed strike in the public sector reinforced institutional credibility.
4ε	opinion of national institutions (positively coded)	+	*increases credibility by improving the national perception of politics*	"Élections libres" *("Free elections", France, 6 Feb 1967)* The articles noted that the electorate had a range of choices in the forthcoming election, as all parties had bought into the new regime. This widespread confidence helped institutional credibility and voter turnout.
		−	*decreases credibility by deteriorating the national perception of politics*	"The apathy vote" *(Great Britain, March 4 1999)* Before the first Scottish Parliament election, it commented on Scots' lack of interest, blaming a political class out of touch with people's interests. This portrayal of politicians hurt institutional credibility and voter turnout.

SOURCES: *La Nación (Costa Rica), La Prensa (Honduras), Daily Mail (UK), Le Monde (France)*

coefficients are smaller, as a total of 1 already means that on average ¼ articles is coded positively for a mechanism, assuming that none are negative.

If this harmonization sounds confusing, a quick example should clarify it. The French sample covers 4.25 years (51 months) organized into five separate sub-samples. Each covers: (a) December 1962 throughout all of 1963 [13 months]; (b) all of 1964 [12]); (c) all of 1965 [12]; (d) all of 1966 [12]; (e) January-February 1967 [2]. Since subsample (a) includes 352 articles and covers 13 months, all cumulative counters are divided by 352, and multiplied by 13/12, to weigh each article as a fraction of a year. Counters for subsample (b) start from the value reached at the end of subsample (a), and each new coded article adds + or – 1/412 to its group and mechanism. In this case no division in months is performed because sample (b) covers exactly a year. At the end, the time marker, which is also divided by the same amounts as the count proceeds, will total 4.25 (years in the sample). Last, all coefficients are divided by 4.25 (or 51 months) and multiplied by 4 (or 48), to obtain a chronologically ordered coefficient that is comparable across all four cases. The following table (2.3) reports the country- specific characteristics that apply to each yearly sample across the four cases.

TABLE 2.3 : MEDIA SAMPLES, BASIC FEATURES

country	source	period begins	period ends	articles (months) covered in separate samples					
				I	II	III	IV	V	total
France	*Le Monde*	December 1962	February 1967	352 (13)	412 (12)	445 (12)	434 (12)	589 (3)	2052 (51)
Honduras	*La Prensa*	December 2009	November 2013	339 (13)	286 (12)	433 (12)	363 (11)	–	1421 (48)
Costa Rica	*La Nación*	February 1994	January 1998	1379 (11)	1194 (12)	1014 (12)	1173 (13)	–	4760 (48)
Great Britain	*Daily Mail*	May 2001	May 2001	375 (8)	444 (12)	442 (12)	440 (12)	950 (5)	2651 (49)

Before summarizing the empirical findings, a caveat is in order. Theory-building exercises which select on the dependent variable – such as picking only cases of electoral revolution – must have the potential to fail, lest they become futile exercises in tautology. In particular, this study tries to capture credibility and competition through many different mechanisms, while also testing their viability as broad factors. For example, credibility is operationalized through seven different components (effective policy, partisan grievances,

protests, economy, institutional opinion, proportionality, participatory reforms). Assuming that credibility has to be positive in expansive electoral revolutions, and negative in restrictive electoral revolutions means that only those components that are aligned "correctly" across the four case studies are considered valid. If, for example, the discourse on the economy looks positive in the negative cases and negative in the positive cases, then it is evidence against the initial hypothesis, because it shows the opposite effect. If, instead, the economy was growing in one positive case and crashing in the other, and the same went for the two negative cases, one would have to assume that its role is inconsistent for electoral revolutions, and therefore the state of the economy would not be in the final model.

2.4 – Empirical Analysis

Testing for how different mechanisms performed in the empirical research leads to the formulation of a unitary theory from a large number of disjointed hypotheses At a basic level, a mechanism can be: (i) absent (ii) present in 1 to 3 cases; (iii) present in all 4 cases. Only mechanisms present in all four cases can lend external validity to a general theory, with a few different possibilities:

(a) the mechanism is not coherent across cases;

(b) the mechanism is coherent for the positive and not the negative cases (or vice-versa);

(c) the mechanism is coherent across all cases.

Table 2.4 shows the added coding for each of the mechanisms, ranging from a minimum of zero to a maximum of 4, as all data is harmonized over a four-year period. The column next to the raw coefficient reports a percentage calculated by dividing the total coefficient by 4. For example a 1.06% for the sum of credibility for France means that the number of positively coded articles for credibility was 1.06% larger than the sum of negatively coded articles for credibility. In other words, on average, every one hundred articles in the French sample, there was one more article coded positively for credibility than negatively. Is this specific effect size small or large? Considering that many different sub-threads of discourse are present in the sample, and that mechanisms will only capture some of these threads, 1/100 is not incredibly small. On the other hand, a coefficient of -14.48% for credibility in Costa Rica is extremely large. In this case, the difference between

positively and negatively coded articles for credibility is larger than one in seven articles, which also shows that credibility articles were comparatively more prominent in comparison with other categories.

TABLE 2.4: ALL MECHANISMS FROM THE FRAMEWORK, TESTED

		France (1962-1967)		Honduras (2009-2013)		United Kingdom (1997-2001)		Costa Rica (1994-1997)	
code	mechanism	coef	%	coef	%	coef	%	coef	%
1α	cohesion of majority	0.0240	**0.60**	0.0647	**1.62**	0.1615	**4.04**	0.0677	**1.69**
1β	strength of majority	-0.0212	**-0.53**	0.1292	**3.23**	0.1278	**3.19**	0.1076	**2.69**
1γ	majority economic record	0.0114	**0.29**	0.0152	**0.38**	-0.0023	**-0.06**	-0.0029	**-0.07**
1δ	anti-goverment protests	0.0108	**0.27**	0.0476	**1.19**	0.0091	**0.23**	0.0105	**0.26**
1ε	authoritarian behavior	-0.0261	**-0.65**	-0.0283	**-0.71**	-0.1565	**-3.91**	-0.0156	**-0.39**
Σ1	**Σ majority**	-0.0011	**-0.03**	0.2283	**5.71**	0.1395	**3.49**	0.1672	**4.18**
2α	Cohesion of opposition	0.1998	**5.00**	0.0201	**0.50**	-0.1947	**-4.87**	-0.0350	**-0.87**
2β	strength of opposition	0.0893	**2.23**	0.1018	**2.54**	-0.0342	**-0.86**	-0.0243	**-0.61**
2γ	opposition-led protests	0.0000	**0.00**	0.0058	**0.15**	0.0000	**0.00**	0.0008	**0.02**
2δ	pro-opposition reforms	0.0000	**0.00**	0.0000	**0.00**	0.0000	**0.00**	0.0000	**0.00**
Σ2	**Σ Opposition**	0.2891	**7.23**	0.1277	**3.19**	-0.2289	**-5.72**	-0.0585	**-1.46**
3α	ideological polarization	0.0506	**1.27**	0.0448	**1.12**	-0.0398	**-0.99**	0.0002	**0.00**
3β	policy-based polarization	0.0686	**1.72**	0.0835	**2.09**	0.1811	**4.53**	0.0306	**0.76**
Σ3	Σ Polarization	0.1193	**2.98**	0.1282	**3.21**	0.1414	**3.53**	0.0308	**0.77**
Σ123	**Σ COMPETITION**	0.4073	**10.18**	0.4842	**12.10**	0.0520	**1.30**	0.1394	**3.49**
4α	policy evaluation	0.0025	**0.06**	0.0991	**2.48**	-0.0070	**-0.17**	0.0265	**0.66**
4β	party-led grievances	-0.0014	**-0.03**	0.0000	**0.00**	-0.0022	**-0.06**	0.0000	**0.00**
4γ	public protests	-0.0066	**-0.16**	-0.2916	**-7.29**	-0.0093	**-0.23**	-0.0451	**-1.13**
4δ	state of the economy	-0.0012	**-0.03**	-0.0576	**-1.44**	0.0000	**0.00**	-0.1082	**-2.70**
4ε	opinion of pol. institutions	0.0460	**1.15**	0.1759	**4.40**	-0.2644	**-6.61**	-0.4536	**-11.34**
4η	participatory reforms	0.0029	**0.07**	0.0283	**0.71**	0.0040	**0.10**	0.0010	**0.03**
Σ4	**Σ CREDIBILITY**	0.0423	**1.06**	-0.0458	**-1.14**	-0.2790	**-6.97**	-0.5793	**-14.48**

NOTES: data harmonized over a period of four years

Without dwelling too long upon the value of single coefficients, the mechanisms can fall into three categories. In the first fall those that are consistent across cases, that is, that are positive in both of the expansive electoral revolutions and negative or neutral in the restrictive ones, or vice-versa. Four mechanisms were consistent: the **cohesion of the opposition**, increasing in the positive cases (France, Honduras) decreasing in negative cases (Costa Rica, UK) with some variation; the **strength of the opposition**, increasing

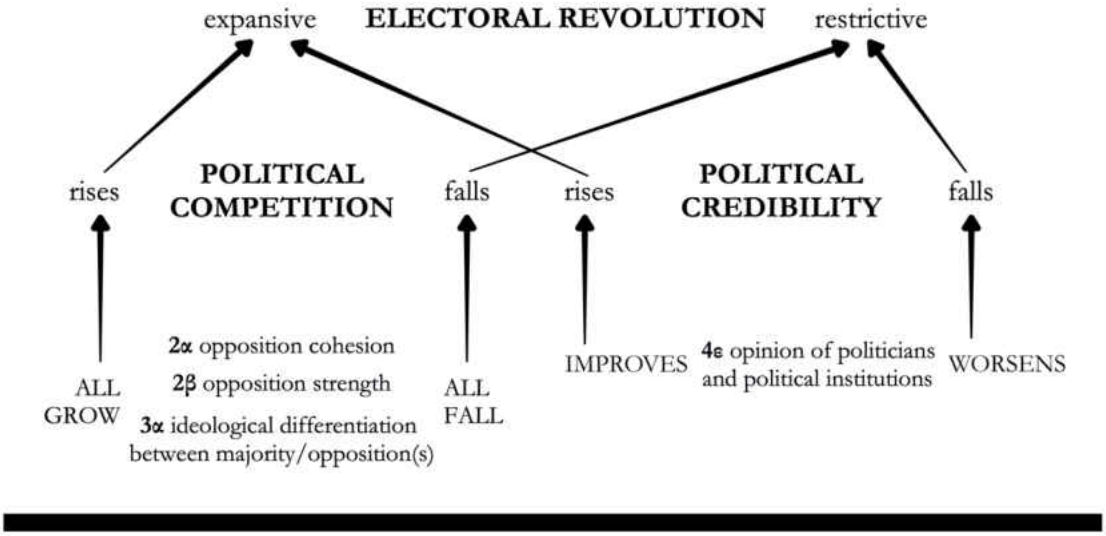
in the positive cases, decreasing in negative cases; **ideological polarization**, increasing in the positive cases, present, but overall stable in Costa Rica, negative in UK; the **judgement of political institutions**, increasing in the positive cases, strongly decreasing in the negative cases. The presence of four such mechanisms allows for the formation of a unitary theory, and they constitute the focus of empirical chapters organized along thematic lines.

Then the remaining two categories include five mechanisms that are contradictory across cases : **cohesion of the majority** decreasing in all four cases, to a varying degree; **strength of the majority** decreasing in all four cases, to a varying degree; **policy-related polarization** increasing in all four cases, to a varying degree; **policy to address issues** present only in Honduras and Costa Rica; **state of the economy** stable in France and UK, decreasing in Honduras and Costa Rica. Even if they do not contribute to the creation of a general theory, these five mechanisms contain some important insight for the researcher regarding the relation of their discursive threads with voter turnout and electoral revolutions. Last, come the mechanisms that are negligible across cases, or present only in one case, which are **anti-government protests, public protests and participatory reforms** present only in Honduras; **authoritarian behavior of majority** only in UK; **economic record of the majority** for which the effect size is extremely small; **protests co-opted by opposition, party-led grievances** almost never present; **pro-opposition reforms** coding was the only one that was never used. These mechanisms are put aside and the empirical chapters examine them only marginally.

Overall then, the development of an electoral revolution passes through changes in the discourse, materializing through a series of factors. Four of these factors have consistent effects, taking opposite sign across expansive and restrictive cases. They constitute the necessary conditions of the general theory. In all four cases, a series of events led to nationwide transformations in the strength and cohesion of the opposition, in the ideological polarization of the party system, and in the trust towards political institutions. The practical manifestation of these changes is visible inside the case studies. This means that in France between 1962 and 1967 and in Honduras between 2009 and 2013 the parties and candidates belonging to the parliamentary opposition got stronger and more cohesive, ideological polarization increased, and citizens' trust in political institutions grew. The electorate responded to these changes by massively increasing its participation across the board. Conversely, in the United Kingdom between 1997 and 2001 and in Costa Rica between 1994 and 1998, the strength and cohesion of the opposition

decreased, the party system became less ideologically polarized and trust in political institutions fell. Massive numbers of British and Costa Rican citizens responded to these transformations by choosing not to cast a ballot on election day.

FIGURE 2.2 – CORE THEORY, NECESSARY CONDITIONS



NOTE: other mechanisms can be still present in single cases to contribute to the outcome

This theorization depends upon four mechanisms, but other factors also influenced each outcome. In particular, across all four cases the strength and cohesion of the majority party or coalition remained stable or decreased. One could have expected strong majorities to be conducive to falls in turnout, and weak majorities resulting in turnout growth. The evidence in the data contradicts this hypothesis. Instead, majorities that get stronger during a legislature might actually be conducive to political stability, which decreases the probability that an electoral revolution will take place, in either positive or negative sense. Looking at the competition side of political context clarifies the matter. In expansive electoral revolutions, a weaker or stable majority in the presence of a strengthening opposition implies that the final outcome will be uncertain. Also significant is that in Honduras the majority started the legislature from a position of great strength, so it needed some weakening to be challenged, while in France it had not been as strong and therefore it took less to make the following election competitive. In restrictive electoral evolutions, a weaker or stable majority in the presence of a weakening opposition forces the electorate to choose between parties that are generally in crisis, and that generally lack appeal. In both cases, this effect is compounded by the creation or deterioration of ideological polarization and trust in political institutions.

This work considers the full period between two consecutive elections as potentially necessary for the development of an *electoral revolution*. Important changes that

influence the final outcome can happen right from the start, once the first election ends. I therefore took into account the whole period between two elections when testing different hypotheses through mechanisms. An alternative would have been to only use the final period, which is a common habit among scholars of elections, which tend to rely upon the final months or even just upon the weeks of the electoral campaign, and keep everything that happened before in the background. Instead of dismissing this approach, I have created a dataset that contains the articles coded for all four countries, but where instead of starting from *election A* and concluding right before *election B*, when the *electoral revolution* took place, I only included the final 6 months or, more accurately, the final one eighth of the whole sample for each country. In so doing the first article coded roughly six months before *election B* served as a "zero point", and I calculated cumulative effects from that moment. I did not test for the eight mechanisms that were absent after the first comparative analysis. Looking at the last 6 months does not alter the picture or allow some hidden trends to emerge. For trust in the national institutions, the long-term trend emerges even more clearly over the last period, with positive cases clearly benefiting from an increase in trust, and negative cases being hurt by negative public opinion. In all the other cases it becomes harder to pinpoint strong effects, and the effects of contingency becomes predominant. After all, it looks like events happening over the four-five years between two elections are actually more important than those taking place over the last six months.

2.5 – Tracing An Eventful Reality

So far, this chapter has showed a series of regularities across the four case studies of *electoral revolution*, expansive and restrictive. These regularities indicate the presence of important transformations in the discursive threads concerning the opposition, political polarization and institutional credibility. Each of these discursive threads unfolded as processes rooted in their own temporality, where change can have a gradual or more abrupt nature. Given that *electoral revolutions* are dramatic transformations in citizens' behavior, the expectation is for them to be preceded by critical events that act as shocks to people's habits of electoral participation or abstention. Selecting such events within each of the four case studies allows for their in-depth evaluation and is instrumental to process tracing. Luckily, having already tested for the coherence of discursive mechanisms across cases, I searched only for events directly referring to those specific threads.

The criteria for event selection must be universal. To qualify, an event must have produced a relevant positive or negative change in one of the four mechanisms. Given how the samples for different countries contain different numbers of articles, and cover different time periods, the number of articles has been homogenized to reflect a fictitious four-year period. In doing so, each article's weight changes based on how many articles are present in the sample for its time period. Searching for relevant events equals looking for temporal periods where a certain mechanism increased or decreased more than "x". The data for all four cases is divided in 40 clusters, going from *election A* to *election B*. Samples are always in chronological order within each of the cases, but since the amount of political news is not homogeneous, different clusters cover varying temporal spans. In other words, the changing density with which political articles appear in the sample creates a political temporality that expands and contracts independently from real-world temporality. What is kept constant over the cases is the length of a year, which coincides to a real year – or, more accurately, to ¼ of the length of the period from *election A* to *election B*. The criterion for relevance is also homogeneous: a cluster of articles is relevant when it includes a 10% positive or negative change in a mechanism, or group of mechanisms. In other words, the difference between the number of positively and negatively coded articles for a mechanism needs to exceed 1/10 of that cluster's number of articles.

A handful of events were considered highly relevant in the secondary sources, but did not pass the threshold. This could be because: (a) they had a more gradual impact; (b) the *Structural Topic Model* automatic selection excluded them, as only the Costa Rican sample covers ALL articles with political content over the whole period; (c) the presence of confounding events coded for the same mechanism reduced their impact in the data. For example, the pact between the two main parties (*PLN* and *PUSC*) in Costa Rica uncontroversially reduced the polarization of the Costa Rican party system between 1994 and 1998. Yet, no data cluster goes over the 1/10 threshold for polarization. Therefore, if that were the only criterion this event would not appear in the table. How can one make sense of this omission? There a few different reasons: (1) the pact's effect on the party system was gradual, as during the course the Figueres legislature, it slowly morphed from a temporary solution to *status quo*; (2) in *La Nación* the discourse around the pact focused more on whether it fostered or hurt the credibility of Costa Rican democracy, which the coding reflects; (3) the constant reports of fighting between the two parties, both uneasy about an alliance with the "enemy", were coded as increasing polarization; (4) the

ideological and policy platforms of the two parties were already close before the 1994, despite both parties' attempts to convince the electorate otherwise.

Following the evolution of different political discourse threads through the events amounts to opening the black box of causality. This chapter creates a general *Mediated Event Theory*, but does not show how each causal nexus unfolded in the cases. In other words, if this work ended here, its analytical part would stop at the general level. For example, the comparison of coding results for the four case studies empirically established that the opposition's strength and cohesion tend to respectively increase and decrease before expansive and restrictive electoral revolutions. Yet, this important result can mean different things in different situations. The configuration of the party system and the state of national institutions at *election A* matter. All things being equal, in terms of competition the initial situation at *election A* always sees the majority always being at least slightly stronger than the opposition. The initial gap is set by the results of *election A*, as interpreted by politicians, journalists, scholars and the public opinion. In particular, the process based on the assumption that all governments are at equilibrium at the moment of their inauguration by simple virtue of having been formed (Laver and Shepsle, 1998). Two different scenarios, taken from the expansive *electoral revolutions* should further clarify the matter.

If the majority has a great advantage at the beginning of the legislature, the creation of more competition passes through the opposition's strengthening or unifying, and a weakening of the majority. This is what we observe in the case of the party system of Honduras, which went from bipartidism and a landslide victory for the *National* party in 2009, to a highly competitive four-party election in 2013. Until 2009 in Honduras only two parties could reasonably aim to form a government, and any alternative seemed nearly impossible. Focusing on a handful of salient events, the transformation materializes, piece after piece. In September 2011, the national institutions allowed the *Resistencia* social movement to register as a political party. This new formation, called *LibRe* was extremely successful in gaining members and support, using the existing structures of a social movement network. The sudden apparition of a nationally viable third party increased the competition of the party system overnight, and transformed the way that the electorate could think and talk about institutional politics in Honduras. And therefore many of those who thought it not worth to vote in national elections, changed their minds and went to the polls Here opposition strength mattered over cohesion, as the parties of the opposition ran separately in 2013, but still had a fair chance of winning.

On the other hand, if the opposition and the majority are close at *election A* then more competition should come from a strong opposition facing a non-weak majority, because if the majority excessively weakens before *election B*, the outcome might be an opposition landslide. This was the case of France between 1962 and 67, where the majority actually controlled only one of the two houses of Parliament, and competition was low only because of a divided opposition, with the Communist *PCF* practically running alone and fragmented centrist parties that had just become less relevent. Two events mattered above all others in creating unity in the opposition: the Presidential endorsement of Francois Mitterrand by the Communist *PCF* in September 1965, and the alliance between the *PCF* and the Federation of the Left in December 1966 (only two months before the 1967 election). Neither of them was imaginable from the perspective of *election A* in 1962.

These two examples are useful to illustrate a few important points about this work:

(1) the creation of a general theory based on four conceptual categories does not mean that other factors do not contribute to generating *electoral revolutions*;

(2) in every case some element will matter more than the others, something which is partly influenced by the starting conditions that exist in the country's political context;

(3) events are counterfactuals, because if the *Supreme Court of Honduras* had not allowed the *Resistencia* to register, or the *PCF* had run a separate candidate in the Presidential election, spectacular increases in participation would have been unlikely;

(4) looking at specific cases helps to establish what the practical manifestation of each concept looks like in reality, because a strong or cohesive opposition will look different, and matter more or less in different circumstances – for example – under a two-round majoritarian system (France) or under proportional representation (Honduras).

After a brief presentation of the institutions and party systems of the countries under scrutiny (section 2.6), the main focusing events are treated at a higher level of detail in the following empirical chapters. *Chapter III* shows the trajectories followed by the majority across the four cases, showing how in both *expansive* and *restrictive* electoral revolutions it was weakened, and what are the implications for the broader theory. *Chapter IV* follows the different evolution of the parties forming the opposition in the four countries, which represented the most important component of competition in this work. *Chapter V* shifts the attention to political polarization, mostly evaluating the role of the ideological component. *Chapter VI* concludes the empirical section by examining the factors related to the credibility of political institutions, and how they changed over time.

2.6 – Institutions And Party Systems

The chapter closes with a comprehensive look at the institutions and party systems of the four countries that form the empirical analysis. This work encompasses much variation in the configuration of the political context across the cases, and the non-frequent comparison of cases from Western Europe and Latin America. A full understanding of the changing conditions leading to positive and negative electoral revolutions depends upon understanding their initial configurations. Such configurations include electoral systems – two-round majoritarian in France, simple plurality first-past-the-post in the United Kingdom, proportional in Honduras and Costa Rica. Along the same line, one must take into account the presence of two-party systems in Honduras and Costa Rica, a three-party system in the United Kingdom and a fragmented party system in the French 1960s. These are presented for each case, just like the evidence from the META analysis is also split between the four accounts in chapters 3 to 6.

TABLE 2.5– ELECTORAL DATA and POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

	France	**Honduras**	**Costa Rica**	**United Kingdom**
election A date	18 Nov. 1962	29 Nov. 2009	6 Feb. 1994	1 May 1997
voters (turnout)	18,333,791 (68.72%)	2,300,057 (49.89%)	1,525,624 (81.09%)	31,286,284 (71.35%)
election B date	5 Mar. 1967	24 Nov. 2013	1 Feb. 1998	7 Jun. 2001
voters (turnout)	22,389,514 (80.92%)	3,275,346 (61.75%)	1,430,579 (69.92%)	26,367,383 (59.38%)
difference	**+12.2%**	**+11.86%**	**-11.17%**	**-11.97%**
govt system	semi-presidentialism	presidentialism	presidentialism	parliamentarism
legislature	bicameral	unicameral	unicameral	bicameral
MPs	**487** (476 in 1962)	**128**	**57**	**659** (*H. of Commons*)
electoral rules	two-round plurality	proportional	proportional	simple plurality
constituencies	**487** (476 in 1962)	**18**	**7**	**657**
threshold	12.5% (for access to second round)	determined by constituency size (1 to 23)	determined by constituency size (5 to 21)	none
re-election	yes	yes (Congress) and no (President)	no for all	yes
compulsory voting	no	yes (unenforced)	yes (unenforced)	no

Table 2.5 offers a quick summary of the different institutional arrangements for each country, which includes some simple electoral figures regarding the electoral

revolutions examined in this manuscript. The four accounts that follow describe the institutions and the main formations that animated the political context in the cases.

2.6.1 – The French electoral institutions and the French party system in the 1960s

Traditionally, French parliamentary elections worked through proportional representation, and with the return to democracy in 1945, the provisional government adopted this arrangement once again. Fear of a communist victory that would plunge the country back into authoritarianism led to introducing a strong majoritarian correction. This happened through the adoption of the *Loi des apparentements*[5] of 1951, which allowed parties to form alliances at constituency level. Any alliance that gathered 50% of votes in a specific location would then receive all seats in that constituency. Those seats were then allocated among the parties that composed the alliance, following their vote share. Under this law the parties of the center effectively kept the Communist left and the *Gaullist* right – neither of which could exceed 30% support – out of power, while still unable to obtain a large majority that could ensure stability.

After years marked by profound instability and the escalation of the Algerian crisis, the sudden nomination of Charles De Gaulle as Prime Minister in 1958 brought to the adoption of a two-round plurality for the same year's legislative elections. Just like its predecessor, the system worked at district level, but this time with each constituency electing only one MP. Any candidate that had obtained at least 12.5% of votes in the first round qualified for the second round, unless one candidate had already reached an absolute majority of 50%. Then in the second round, the candidate who gathered a plurality of votes won the seat. In his seminal book on political parties Maurice Duverger (1951) believed the new system was conducive to the preservation a multiparty system, but also favored healthy ad-hoc alliances which depended upon first-round results. The passing of another referendum in 1962 introduced direct Presidential elections, leading the country into semi-presidentialism. This system has survived to this day, and pushed a further majoritarian element into the system. The following parties, ordered from the left to the right in a traditional ideological sense, made up the French party system during the 1962-1967 period examined in the *META* analysis.

[5] *Law of coalitions*

The **Union pour la Nouvelle Republique** *(UNR, Union for the New Republic*), a moderate conservative formation, was the new incarnation of the *gaullist* party. Despite lacking a structured party organization, it had won the 1958 legislative election, to everyone's surprise, exploiting the General's popularity. It had successfully eroded the consensus of the traditional center-right parties. Forced to create a national organization to support De Gaulle, it won even more votes in the 1962 election and became a mass party during the 1960s. It was not famous for internal democracy or tolerance of dissent.

The **Union Démocratique du Travail** (*UDT*, *Democratic Work Union*) was the gaullist left, which differentiated itself for a more labor oriented policy focus. It joins in for the 1962 election, and the two basically become one and the same party in the context of the 1967 election. This **UNR-UDT** bloc supported the new government led by Georges Pompidou starting in early 1962.

The **Centre National des Indépendents et Paysans**, (*CNIP*, *National Center of Independents and Countrymen*) was a moderate right-wing party which left some leeway in the way its MPs voted, following a philosophy of independence. It had been electorally strong until suffering a heavy defeat in 1962, which basically made it irrelevant beyond local elections. Then after the election the party split, since a branch wanted to stay in government with De Gaulle (see *RI* below). It would form the *Centre Democratique* parliamentary group with the *MRP*, and support Jean Lecaunet in the 1965 Presidential election.

Then the **Républicains Independents** (*RI*, *Independent Republicans*) were the result of the *CNIP* scission, led by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and quickly becoming a pro-European party that decided to collaborate with De Gaulle and allowed for the formation of a majority coalition in 1962. It was an important player in the lead-up to the 1967 election, when its ambiguous role weakened the UNR-UDT's grip on power.

The **Mouvement Republicain Populaire** (*MRP*, *Popular Republican Movement*) was the centrist Christian-democratic party of France, reborn in 1944 as the new incarnation of the *Popular Party* of the interwar period. Weakened during the 1960s, it formed the core of the *Centre Democratique* and supported Jean Lecaunet for President in 1965, with some unexpected success.

The **Parti Radical** (*PR, Radical Party*) was France's historical mass party of the center-left. Founded in 1901, it had frequently taken part in coalition governments. It was a major loser of the 1962 Constitutional referendum, penalized by the memories of its

recent alliance with De Gaulle. It was forced to become part of the *Fédération* of the left to remain electorally relevant.

The **Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière** (*SFIO*, *French Section of the Workers' International*) known as "*Les Socialistes*", was the largest reformist party of the French left. It had already been in government with the *Radicals* and the *CNIP* between 1956 and 1958, before the Algerian crisis escalated. Then then supported the early phase De Gaulle's premiership. Led by Guy Mollet, who after the first round of the 1962 election broke with the rest of the center, it also produced another important pole of attraction in Gaston Defferre, mayor of Marseille. Mollet was ultimately able to rally the party and lead it into the *Fédération* promoted by Mitterrand after the 1965 Presidential election.

The **Parti Socialiste Unifié** (*PSU*, *Unified Socialist Party*) born as a splinter of the *SFIO* in 1960, was the most competent, intellectual party of the left, ideologically closer to the *PCF* than any other party. Electorally marginal, but very important to leftist political discourse, it would collaborate with *SFIO* and *PCF* to create the electoral alliance for 1967. It was led by Edouard Dupreux, but its most illustrious member was former Prime Minister Pierre Mendès-France.

During the 1960s the **Parti Communiste Français** (*PCF*, *French Communist Party*) was going through its internal de-Stalinization, which included the acceptance of a democratic path to Communism. It was the party with the most organizational and financial resources, arguably thanks to membership dues and generous Soviet support. It was desperate to get to government, even if its leaders knew that nobody would accept a Communist as a President. Maurice Thorez was at the helm until his death 1964, when he was replaced by Waldeck Rochet, who led PCF to ally with *SFIO* in 1966.

2.6.2 – The Honduran electoral institutions and the Honduran party system in the 2000s

Compared to other Central American nations, post-war Honduras experienced relative political stability, especially after its last spell of authoritarian rule concluded shortly at the end of the 1970s, and lacking revolutionary events. At the institutional level, the presence of a two-party system under proportional representation between the 1980 and 2013 might look odd. Proportional electoral systems are usually considered a natural source of fragmented multiparty systems. Yet, the combination of Presidentialism with a

unicameral Congress, small constituency sizes and a Constitutional provision mandating simultaneous elections for national, regional and municipal elections every four years, had favored the consolidation of two main parties.

Until 2010 the Honduran party system gravitated around two broad formations with a long history, the *Partido Liberal* and the *Partido Nacional*, animated by internal currents which corresponded to catalyzing figures and local power centers. A peculiarity of the Honduran electoral system is that proportional representation is implemented over constituencies corresponding to administrative divisions of extremely different sizes. From the smallest to the largest, they elect between 1 and 23 representatives. Consequently, the large parties dominate in the smaller regions, where the small district size erases the effect of proportionality by creating very high *de facto* thresholds. For example, the two districts that only elect one representative, work as first-past-the-post. Therefore, the smaller parties lacking the national notoriety and resources to compete for office, only gain seats in the larger districts such as Francisco Morazán, which includes the capital Tegucigalpa. These formations could at best hope for a tie between *Nacionales* and *Liberales* resulting in a hung parliament and their subsequent participation in a coalition government. The two main parties traditionally held highly competitive official primaries for all levels of office a year before the election. The primaries also marked the unofficial beginning of extremely long Presidential campaigns. This is how the main parties arrived to the late 2000s.

The **Partido Liberal** (*PL*, *Liberal Party*), founded in 1891, was one of the two traditional parties of Honduras. Among the two, *PL* was the one that had accommodated currents with more leftist inclinations. Over the course of its centenary history Honduran *Liberalismo* had supported some moderate social reforms and had been opposed to the military dictatorship in the 1970s. Since the return to democracy in 1981 it had won most national elections, and retook the Presidency with Manuel Zelaya in 2005 after a term at the opposition. Zelaya's presidency – explored more at length during the chapter 4 introduction – had moved to the left in search of abroad support, which had led to membership in the Bolivarian Alliance *ALBA*. Its end in a *coup d'état* in June 2009, happening by the hand of the party leadership, put democracy in peril. It also damaged the party once constitutional order was restored for the November 2009 election by tainting its image almost irremediably.

The **Partido Nacional** (*PN*, *National Party*) was similarly founded in 1902 to represent a more conservative and patriotic vision of the country. It was generally considered closer to the military and the police, but no less inclined to maintaining civil

government during the 1990s than its rival. Just like the Liberal party, it was rooted on the territory through clientelist networks. Its currents were more ideological coherent and party discipline was kept with less difficulty. Some disappointment inside the party was still brewing from the last *Nacional* presidency under Ricardo Maduro (2001-2005) who had nominated a government cabinet of his own making instead of rewarding the different currents inside the party. It had lost the 2005 election under the leadership of Porfirio Lobo, who was confirmed by the primaries as the party's official candidate for 2009.

Among the smaller parties, two had been founded around the 1981 election that marked the return to democracy. The **Partido Democrata Cristiano** (*DC*, *Christian Democracy Party*) had been created in the late 1960s with Christian humanist inspirations, but had not been allowed to compete electorally until the end of authoritarianism. It had never elected more than 2 MPs until the 2005 election when it gathered 5. On the other side, the **Partido Inovación y Unidad** (*Innovation and Unity Party*, *PINU*) represented modern social-democratic views, but was just as marginal to the political equilibria of the country. The last important formation was **Unificación Democrática** (*UD*, *Democratic Unification*) which had formed in the early 1990s to coalesce the main formations of the radical left after the end of the Cold War. Yet, its electoral support had remained limited. Outside of political parties, the unions, especially those linked to students and teachers, had mobilization power that became visible in spurts.

2.6.3 – The Costa Rican electoral institutions and the Costa Rican party system in the 1990s

At a glance, during the 1990s the national political institutions of Costa Rica and its party system might have looked very similar to those of Honduras. Proportional representation, two main parties, neither of which represented particularly extreme ideological positions, a powerful Constitutional Court. Yet, differences were just as important as similarities. First of all, Costa Rica had a longer democratic history, having had no authoritarian relapse after the 1940s. That era gave Costa Rica new institutions to resist the *caudillismo* that had marked its first century of independence, and one of its two main parties. At the same time, the new electoral system had some rigidities and created uncertainty in partisan representation. Not only it prohibited presidential re-election – a

common provision in Latin American democracies – went a step further and also prohibited parliamentary re-election. Therefore, the unicameral legislature's 57 MPs left their seats every four years, and unlike Presidents they could be re-elected after sitting one legislature out. This made for bitterly fought party primaries not just for presidential nomination, but also for preferential placement the closed party lists for every department.

The different size of the 7 electoral districts also produced some difference in degree of proportionality, but in a more balanced fashion than in Honduras. Even in the smallest district on the Atlantic, which elected four MPs, local parties were able to compete for electing a national representative. Nevertheless, the dominance of the two main parties was almost total, having gained at least 50 of the 57 Congressional seat in every election since 1978 thanks to a large resource advantage. Going more directly to the period that is the focus of the empirical analysis, the following parties made up the party system of Costa Rica during the 1990s, preceding the transformation that took place in the early XXI century. Given the prominence of the two main parties, they are mentioned first, followed by the smaller parties in ideological order (right to left).

Partido Liberación Nacional (*PLN*, *National Liberation Party*) – often just *Liberación* – was then the most established political party in the country, the one with the most solid organization on the ground. Representing a reformist, non-Marxist left-wing ideology, its story was inextricably linked to the country's return to democracy after the end of World War Two. It had held the government in most occasions since then, and most recently between 1982 and 1990 under the presidencies of Monge and Arias. During that period, it had moved towards the center of the political spectrum in the aftermath of financial default. It had lost power in 1990 for having failed to curtail the growth of poverty in the country.

Partido Unidad Social Cristiana (*PUSC*, *SocialCristian Unity Party*), or just *Unidad*, was the other half of the two-party system, and occupied the center-right of the political spectrum. Before its creation in 1977 this ideological area was routinely organized as a broad unity coalition, but had not existed as a single political party. It had embraced neoliberalism during the 1980s, albeit with some rhetorical and practical attention for Costa Rican exceptionalism and the importance of the public sector. Its involvement with the debt crisis that brought the country to default in 1981 effectively kept it out of power until 1990, when it won the presidency back with Rafael Angel Calderón Fournier.

Alongside these two larger parties, several smaller formations gained access to Congress during the 1990s. The most important of them was **Fuerza Democratica** (*FD*,

Democratic Force), which recent foundation in 1992 actively attempted to counterbalance the two-party system equilibrium and proposed moderate socialist views. At the extremes of the ideological spectrum, the far right had no representation in parliament, while libertarian, entrepreneurial and agricultural interests animated some of the smaller parties that occasionally gained a seat or two. As for the far left, it had some relevance through the **Vanguardia Popular** (*Popular Vanguard*) party in the 1970s but by the 1990s it had lost all parliamentary representation except for a single MP for the coalition **Pueblo Unido** (*United People*).

2.6.4 – The British electoral institutions and the British party system in the 1990s

British politics have been, and still are, rooted in a long tradition of parliamentarianism, with formal opposition politics and a draconian first-past-the-post electoral system which generates wasted votes but also makes it easy to punish unsatisfying local candidates. Government formation has been for a long time a single-party affair, like in Honduras and in Costa Rica, and majorities tended to be stable, except in cases of deep economic crisis. Another peculiarity is that, even if England elects 533 out of Britain's 657 MPs to the House of Commons, the United Kingdom is a multinational state where Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have each their own party system. In each territory nationalist parties compete with all-Britain formations. Even if this work is focused on elections to the lower house, the presence of an upper chamber – the *House of Lords* – which during the 1990s was still largely based on hereditary peerage and only partially elected, was a counterbalance to electoral outcomes.

Unlike the Central American cases just described, alternation in power had stopped after 1979, so that by 1997 Britain had been under *Conservative* party rule for 18 years. Nevertheless, national and local elections were still bitterly fought and remained events of national resonance. The following parties made up the party system of the United Kingdom at the national level during the 1990s. They are ordered once again from right to left in a strict ideological sense.

The **Conservative** party, also known historically as the *Tory* party, was Britain's best known political formation, its foundation dating back to 1834. It had won an unprecedented four consecutive elections in 1979, 1983, 1987 and 1992, the first three

under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, who had shifted the party away from traditional conservatism towards economic liberalism and closer relationships to the United States. During the 1990s it was facing the inherent limits of power in democratic regimes, as people started to desire change. Due its unionist stance against local autonomies, the party also lost ground outside of England, an important source of electoral weakness. Under the premiership of John Major – who replaced Thatcher in 1990 and won the 1992 election – the party also lost its reputation for good economic management in the *Black Wednesday* monetary crisis.

The **Liberal-Democratic** (or *LibDem*) party, had been born in 1988 out of the fusion of the historical *Liberal* party, dating back to 1859, with the moderate wing of the *Labour* party (the *Social Democrats*). These two parties had competed together in the 1983 election, aiming to create a third pole, a centrist option equidistant from the left and the right. The *Liberal Democrats* had successfully maintained this positioning until the 1990s, but without becoming a viable option for government. Although lagging behind the *Conservatives* and *Labour* in terms of support, they were the only other party of national resonance to win a consistent number of seats in general elections and local councils. They had been led by Paddy Ashdown since 1988 and at the end of the Major legislature plans had been made for a possible coalition with *Labour* in case of a hung parliament in 1997.

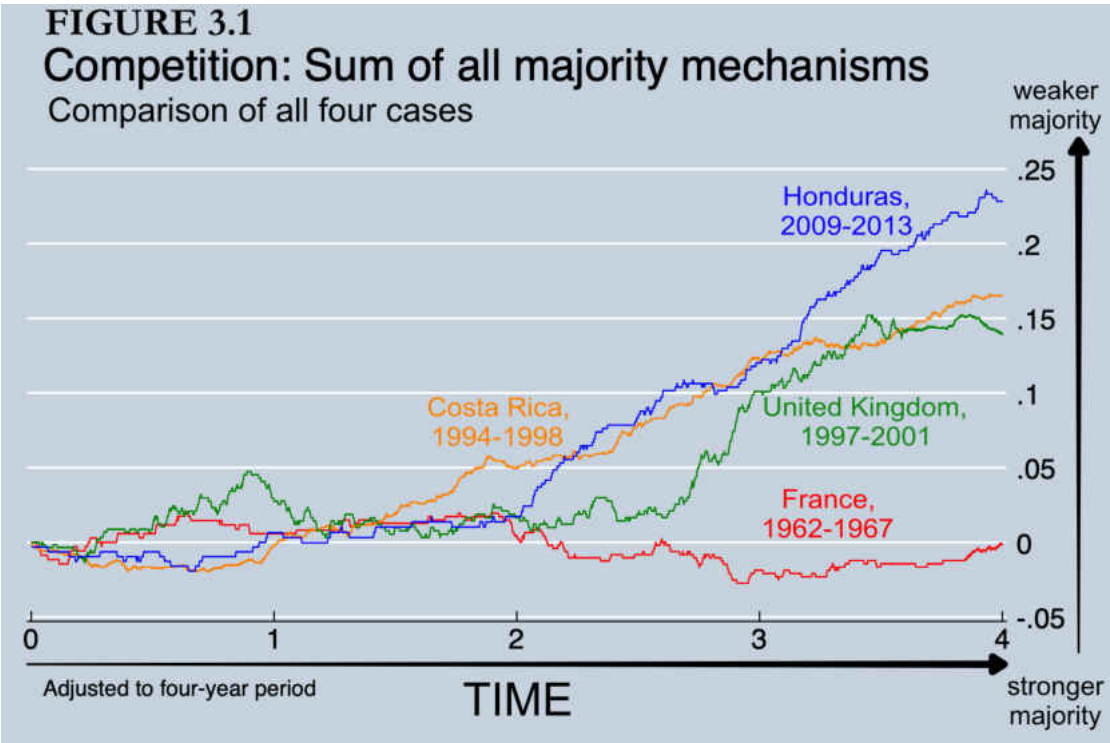
The **Labour** party, to its left, had been created by the *Trade Union Congress* in 1900. It was the only other party to have governed post-War Britain other than the *Tories*, and it was responsible for the creation of an extensive network of public welfare. After many years leading the official opposition, by the 1990s it had gained a status as outsider, and was obsessed with returning into power. It had shifted towards the ideological center through a series of leadership changes that brought the party from the socialist Michael Foot, to Neil Kinnock who distanced himself from the embattled coal unions, to the short tenure of John Smith, to young Tony Blair, who in 1994 brought a different style of politics inside a party seen as old and unable to reform. He also campaigned in 1997 on a platform of devolution, which in the long run accidentally ended up empowering Scottish and Welsh parties to its own detriment.

Important at the national level, while only running candidates in their specific constituencies were the nationalist parties. The most important and successful was and is the **Scottish National Party**, which during the 1990s was gaining ground. **Plaid Cymru** (*Party of Wales*) absolved a similar role in Wales, but it was also less able to exploit nationalist and independentist claims due to a more moderate electorate. At the same time, compared

to their Scottish counterpart they were more firmly to the ideological left. The three main parties (*Tories*, *Labour*, *LibDem*) fielded candidates in Scotland and Wales alongside the two nationalist parties. Northern Ireland also has representatives in the House of Commons and has its own separate party system along the main religious cleavage between the protestant/catholic, republican/unionist lines. It was made up of two main Irish nationalist parties **Sinn Fein** (*We Ourselves*) and **SDLP** (*Social Democratic and Labour Party*) Irish nationalists, and two unionist parties **DUP** (*Democratic Unionist Party*), and **UUP** (*Ulster Unionist Party*). Sinn Fein candidates that are elected renounce their mandate in protest with the political arrangements of the region.

CHAPTER III

COMPETITION : THE MAJORITY



This first empirical chapter looks at the majority-related side of political competition. In other works, it looks at the discourse regarding the parties forming the executive cabinet and the parliamentary majority, and the events that changed their perceived strength and cohesion. Political parties in democratic regimes do not exist in a void, but always in a relationship, a dialog among each other and societal institutions. Every party system is a system of interactions between political parties (Sartori, 1975). When testing a range of hypotheses across the cases in Chapter II, no majority-related mechanisms were coherent and consistent in their sign and intensity when pitted against the turnout outcomes. Certainly, the finding that opposition politics matter more than the majority to the creation of electoral revolutions is surprising. What, then, should one make of this account? I argue that a lack of generalizable findings does not lessen its importance. Contingent elements matter to determine the outcome in single cases, and some regularities can still be observed. Moreover, a slight weakening of the majority mattered for positive electoral revolutions to make the election more competitive, while the negative cases show that the whole party system got weaker, majority and opposition together.

In the French case, the *Gaullist* coalition went from a strong performance in 1962, to almost losing the 1967 election to the leftist opposition, stopping a seat short of absolute

majority. Yet, the loss of only seven seats in the Assembly was no massive weakening, even if the new post-1967 majority would rely on centrist parties. In the middle, general De Gaulle's second round victory in the first ever Presidential election in 1965 was uncontroversial, but less of a landslide than expected. In these few observations lies a point raised by contemporaries: the *Gaullist* majority had promised stability and prosperity, while crushing the old parties' opposition. Yet, this had been hardly the case, and the General himself was embarrassed by it. More than a weakened majority – which was the model's initial prediction – one can see how in 1962-1967 a clear gap opened between expectations and reality. This gap made the majority look beatable and the 1967 election could be seen as highly competitive by national political discourse.

In Honduras, the situation was very different, and the case more closely follows the initial theory's expectations. Between 2009 and 2013 the *Partido Nacional* majority massively lost support, despite the efforts made by President Lobo to keep the country afloat in a moment of institutional and economic crisis. In the raw quantitative terms, the share of parliamentary votes for the *Nacionales* fell from 53% to 33%. The media coverage showing the evolution of political discourse around the majority, reproduces the difference between the two initial years, where the party managed to stay relatively strong and cohesive and the following two years, marked by external criticism and internal quarrels. Contrary to the French case then, one can see how the majority was dramatically weakened. Yet, in both of these cases of voting expansion, while increased competition was due to the growth of the opposition, the majority still won another term in office. It therefore seems reasonable that in order to have a positive electoral revolution, the majority cannot be too weak, because its supporters still have to turn out to the polls, and there has to be a real challenge, a contested race within the party system.

Then for negative electoral revolutions the model's expectations are turned on their head. The Costa Rican story differs from the other three for showing a majority weakened early on, which went through a spectacular sequence of public failures. The *Partido Liberación Nacional* had come back to government in 1994 after four years in the opposition, but the Figueres administration was never able to achieve the public confidence necessary to gain another term in office. The section relative to Costa Rica then depicts the collapse of a party that had become weak and divided after only a year and then never recovered. It is quite telling that some contemporary commentators imagined that the majority party would not survive this crisis and would have to split. The distance between the activists in the party base and the internal leadership of the party also became wider in the same period,

and the primaries led to even more arguments on how to move forward. In this instance, much responsibility for the loss of votes seen in 1998 falls on the majority party and its failure to deliver on the 1994 campaign policy promises.

TABLE 3.1 - COMPETITION of POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS : MAJORITY MECHANISMS EFFECT, SIGN and INTENSITY in MEDIA SAMPLES

		France (1962-1967)	Honduras (2009-2013)	Costa Rica (1994-1998)	Great Britain (1997-2001)
YEAR 1	*articles in sample* [a]	345	312	1478	532
	coded majority [b]	36	26	156	121
	% (discourse intensity) [c]	**10.43%**	**8.33%**	**10.55%**	**22.74%**
	coded +/– majority [d]	19 | 17	14 | 12	75 | 81	68 | 53
	% positive (disc skewness) [e]	**52.78%**	**53.85%**	**48.08%**	**56.20%**
	difference +/– [f]	+2	+2	-6	+15
	% (discourse effect) [g]	**0.58%**	**0.64%**	**-0.41%**	**2.82%**
YEAR 2	*articles in sample* [a]	437	289	1179	452
	coded majority [b]	25	19	197	99
	% (discourse intensity) [c]	**5.72%**	**6.57%**	**16.71%**	**21.90%**
	coded +/– majority [d]	12 | 13	11 | 8	130 | 67	47 | 52
	% positive (disc skewness) [e]	**48.00%**	**57.89%**	**65.99%**	**47.47%**
	difference +/– [f]	-1	+3	+63	-5
	% (discourse effect) [g]	**-0.23%**	**1.04%**	**5.34%**	**-1.11%**
YEAR 3	*articles in sample* [a]	472	420	1020	451
	coded majority [b]	75	72	173	130
	% (discourse intensity) [c]	**15.89%**	**17.14%**	**16.96%**	**28.82%**
	coded +/– majority [d]	32 | 43	57 | 15	123 | 50	84 | 46
	% positive (disc skewness) [e]	**42.67%**	**79.17%**	**71.10%**	**64.62%**
	difference +/– [f]	-11	+42	+73	+38
	% (discourse effect) [g]	**-2.33%**	**10.00%**	**7.16%**	**8.43%**
YEAR 4	*articles in sample* [a]	798	400	1083	1216
	coded majority [b]	152	75	217	272
	% (discourse intensity) [c]	**19.05%**	**18.75%**	**20.04%**	**22.37%**
	coded +/– majority [d]	92 | 60	59 | 16	132 | 85	143 | 129
	% positive (disc skewness) [e]	**60.53%**	**78.67%**	**60.83%**	**52.57%**
	difference +/– [f]	+32	+43	+47	+14
	% (discourse effect) [g]	**4.01%**	**10.75%**	**4.34%**	**1.15%**
TOTAL	*articles in sample* [a]	2052	1421	4760	2651
	coded majority [b]	288	192	743	622
	% (discourse intensity) [c]	**14.04%**	**13.51%**	**15.61%**	**23.46%**
	coded +/– majority [d]	155 | 133	141 | 51	460 | 283	342 | 280
	% positive (disc skewness) [e]	**53.82%**	**73.44%**	**61.91%**	**54.98%**
	difference +/– [f]	+22	+90	+177	+62
	% (discourse effect) [g]	**1.07%**	**6.33%**	**3.72%**	**2.34%**

LEGEND **a**: total number of articles for each case study; **b**: articles coded for any majority mechanism; **c**: b/a ratio, indicating how prominent the mechanism is in the sample; **d**: articles with positive and negative coding of b; **e**: percentage of articles coded positively (when over 50%, positive articles are prevalent, and vice-versa under 50%) **f**: difference between the numbers in d, **g**: f/a ratio, prominence of the difference between positive and negative. The color red denotes any value that is negative in some sense (including e below 50%).

Last, in Britain between 1997 and 2001, Blair's new majority almost never seemed in trouble of losing re-election. The *Labour* party had come back in government after 18 long

years, having modernized and moved to the political center. A good economy left room for ambitious policymaking. Yet, the media coverage of the government was negative because of a series of internal ideological divisions and searing corruption scandals, while the party largely betrayed the expectation of those that voted it in 1997. It cruised from a landslide win in 1997 to another in 2001, but lost nearly three million voters in the process, quite a singular accomplishment. Had the opposition not been in complete disarray during the same period, Blair would have certainly been a single-term Prime Minister and would not have left as big of a mark on British politics. Therefore, it seems as if, regardless of victory or loss, a great weakening of the majority is necessary to a negative electoral revolution, where large numbers suddenly stop voting.

Given that in the theoretical framework and in the codebook a strong majority hurts competition and participation, any article depicting the majority as weak or divided is coded positively. The sign of all quantitative and qualitative assessments follows the same logic. For example, a total discourse skewness of 73.44% for Honduras indicates a positive impact on competition and a weak/divided majority. Out of 100 articles coded for the Honduran majority, over 73 depicted it as weak or divided, therefore theoretically contributing to increase competition. Table 3.1 also shows that the strength, cohesion, economic evaluation and protests concerning the majority, as imaginable, take on a stable chunk of the overall political discourse. Quantitatively, the number of articles coded can be considered large, in the 13-15% range for France, Honduras and Costa Rica, and significantly higher in the United Kingdom (23%). In France and Honduras the majority also obtained more intense coverage during the second half of the legislature, with strong effects in the final year (4% and 10% difference in year four). The discourse appears to have been more balanced in France and Britain, where the effect was comparatively smaller, whereas in Honduras and Costa Rica the size of the negative tendency was more marked.

TABLE 3.2 : Events affecting COMPETITION disc. positively [+], negatively [–] through MAJORITY

France(1962-1967)	*Honduras(2009-2013)*	*Costa Rica(1994-1998)*	*United Kingdom(1997-2001)*
12/62.unprecedented cohesion[-]	*11/10.reshuffle announced [+]*	*10/95.Rodrig., Castro resign[+]*	*4/97.Robin Cook scandal [+]*
6/63.majority loses in Senate [+]	*2/12.Ministerial resignations [+]*	*6/96 PLN worst polling ever [+]*	*4/98.Labour Scottish strategy [-]*
12/64.Municip elect alliances [-]	*4/12.divided PN convention [+]*	*10/96.PLN death knell [+]*	*2/99.Welsh leadership contest [+]*
12/65.De Gaulle endorsed [-]	*4/13.security policy failure [+]*	*1/98.PLN election suspended [+]*	*5/00.Livingstone London mayor[+]*
6/66.Pouj./VGE empowered[+]	*8/13.anti-gov't protests [+]*		*5/01.Landslide predicted [-]*

LEGEND: all events are formatted as month/year, event, sign. ** indicates that the event is present in the secondary literature, but not in the sample, or it is present but its impact is gradual over some months or confused by other events.

Table 3.2 offers a recap of the main events that catalyzed the transformations inside the majority across the cases. It is easy to appreciate the lack of coherence, with positive and negative electoral revolutions looking similar, any clear opposite patterns. Yet,

one thing seems to make sense across the cases: in all electoral revolutions majorities are never strong. For positive electoral revolutions, where a lot of people suddenly turn out to the polls, they cannot be too weak either, because they have to pose a real challenge to a strengthened opposition. In France the majority only lost a handful of seats between the two elections, but it had become a beatable competitor in 1967. In 1962 a defeat had been unthinkable. In Honduras, where the *Partido Nacional* went from a 2009 landslide to a small-margin outcome, the majority had weakened but not to the point of losing in 2013. On the other hand, for negative electoral revolutions, government majorities need to be significantly weakened, just like the opposition. In both Costa Rica and Britain, the relationship of strength between parties remained unaltered, in the first case it went from a small margin election to another small-margin election, although power changed hands, and in the second case it went from landslide to landslide for the same party. What changed is that it produced a similar outcome, but did so with all parties, regardless of whether they belonged to the majority or the opposition, having become much weaker.

3.1 – Different Cases, Different Starting Points

3.1.1 – The Gaullist majority in France before November 1962

In France, the majority of the 1958-1962 legislature had been centered around a new party, the *Union pour la Nouvelle République* (*UNR*), founded to support the political return of Charles de Gaulle. When he became Prime Minister in summer 1958, he was supported by a government of national unity as he tried to solve a delicate political and institutional crisis. It incorporated all parties of the center-right and center-left, ranging from the Independents, to the Christian-democrat *MRP*, to the Socialist *SFIO*. It was instrumental to approving a constitutional referendum in September 1958, when the French voted to lead the country towards Presidentialism. The legislative election of November 1958 then certified a new political equilibrium, through the success of the alliance between the *Independents* and the *Gaullists*, which together gained 323 of the 576 seats of the Assemblée by supporting each other's candidates in the second round. In January 1959 the electoral college nominated De Gaulle President. Gradually the coalition that supported him lost

some pieces, most notably in late 1959 when the *SFIO* Socialists expressed their dissent towards the *Gaullist* political agenda and left the cabinet.

The 1958-1962 legislature was then one of the most important in the country's history. The Algerian conflict that had started in 1954 and the hardline positions of the local French had made it hard to solve. In January 1961 the citizens of both territories voted to approve the colony's self-determination, which was approved by 75% of voters, on a 92% voter turnout. Then in April four rogue French generals seized power in Algiers, threatening to bring the country into a civil war. Luckily the rest of the army, stationed in France, disagreed with their plans, and De Gaulle's moral authority worked to keep the country together. In this delcate phase accomplished something remarkable by making Michel Debré Prime Minister in this delicate phase by having one of the strongest proponents of a French Algeria deliver its independence (Thody, 1998). Then in April 1962, a second referendum with even higher consensus (90%) marked the end of the war by ratifying the évian peace agreement. Yet, being considered a man of the political right, the *Général* upset many by letting Algeria go. He responded by doing an extensive clean-up of the ranks of his party to eliminate all supporters of the colonial project and distance himself clearly from the terrorists.

The rest of year was politically turbulent. The substitution of Michel Debré with Georges Pompidou as cabinet leader in April 1962 did not appease the centrist parties' concerns of creeping single-party regime. The presence of *MRP* and *CNIP* Ministers in the first Pompidou cabinet still meant that De Gaulle had to rely on the old parties, and on politicians that he had not personally picked. In August the *Général* was the target of a terrorist attack by the *OAS*[6] (*Secret Armed Organization*), after which he decided to accelerate the transition to Presidentialism. He called for another referendum, which would create the direct election of the president, something unprecedented in the French context. The legislature ended abruptly through a vote of no confidence in early October 1962, as all parties outside of *UNR* protested the referendum. Inside the parties that had helped De Gaulle stay in power, Algeria and Presidentialism had also both become a cause of internal divisions, which they tried to overcome through the formation of a "cartel du non" and campaigning for keeping parliamentarism. Their defeat in the referendum and the exceptionally good result of the Gaullists in the 1962 election transformed the majority, allowing the *UNR-UDT* to continue governing without them. In particular, the *Independent*

[6] *Organisation Armée Sécrete*

(*CNIP*) party split in two, with a secessionist half remaining in government after 1962 with the name *Republicains Independents*, and the other going into opposition.

3.1.2 – The Partido Nacional in Honduras before December 2009

Since Honduras returned to democracy in the 1980s its politics had been marked by alternation between two main parties, *Nacional* and *Liberal*. Of the two, the *Partido Nacional* was considered slightly more to the ideological right and generally more able to preserve cohesion among its internal currents, and between 2005 and 2009 it was the main opposition. The climate around its 2008 primaries was generally relaxed and confident. There was a clear frontrunner, Porfirio "*Pepe*" Lobo, who was from the Olancho department like the current President. He had lost the 2005 election to Manuel Zelaya – and one major challenger, Jorge Canahuati, owner of three major national newspapers: *La Prensa*, *El Heraldo*, and *Diez*. Lobo won with a confident margin, gathering 72% of preferences to Canahuati's 23%. The result was even more impressive because the winner's internal current obtained 95% of the mayoral and parliamentary candidatures (Taylor-Robinson, 2009). Capitalizing on these positive results, Lobo tried to unite the party and to portray himself as everybody's candidate (Rodriguez, 2011).

In early 2009, the Zelaya administration was losing support and he was being undermined by the internal currents of his own party. The *Nacionales* exploited this situation to their own advantage often voted with the dissenting *Liberales* in Congress. To attack the President, the party pointed the finger at the escalation of violence that was choking the country, and which became the hot theme of the following campaign. Also, as a contentious argument around the creation of a *Constituyente* unfolded, Zelaya reached out to Lobo, who knew that if a referendum were to be held in 2009, the *Asamblea* could have fallen under his Presidency. Lobo kept an open mind, saying in April that he was generally in favor of a *Cuarta Urna* for the upcoming November elections, but absolutely contrary to any policy of *continuismo*. The leadership of the *Partido Nacional* was afraid that Zelaya was attempting to do away with the two-party system, and removed him in a non-violent *coup d'état* in June 2009. Although there is no proof of direct involvement of *PN* politicians in the *golpe*, most of its congressmen voted for the creation of an interim administration, and so did the recently elected *PN*-quota members of the *Corte Suprema de*

Justicia. They then voted with the *Liberales* in Congress at every step of the interim administration. The *Nacionales* supported the coup because they sensed that they had everything to gain, given that the party was united, and new elections had been scheduled for December 2009.

In August the situation remained extremely unclear, and could have still resulted in a full authoritarian consolidation for Honduras. At this crucial moment, Lobo made his move and started expressing great confidence in his Presidential chances, and even started naming his future cabinet. When in September Zelaya snuck back into the country, Lobo and some of his fellow *Nacionales* took a step back from Micheletti, and started advocating for normalization. While there were many inside his own party that still defended the coup's legitimacy, Lobo probably worried that the postponement of the election would have barred him from becoming President. An October 2009 Gallup poll gave *PN* a clear advantage, with 37% of preferences against *PL*'s 23% (Rodriguez, 2011). When international pressure finally led to the organization of the scheduled general election, the media accused Lobo of having met in private with American diplomats, which he vehemently denied.[7] In the alleged meeting, the *Nacional* candidate would have traded his agreement to Zelaya's return to the country with the recognition of the election abroad. When the election finally came in late November, his candidacy gained a landslide victory going way beyond predictions, obtaining 1.2 million votes and 56% in the Presidential contest. In Congress, the *Nacionales* obtained 71 out of the 128 seats, the most for any party since 1997. Overall then, the new administration had a strong mandate, a comfortable parliamentary majority and a well-oiled party organization ready to support it.

3.1.3 – The PLN in Costa Rica before March 1994

Just like Honduras in 2009, Costa Rica in 1994 had a strong two-party system. The *PLN* administration that took over in 1994 was coming from a term in opposition. Facing economic crisis, *PLN* presidents Luis Alberto Monge (1982-1986) and Oscar Arías (1986-1990) had embraced structural adjustment plans and pragmatic politics, without disowning the party's roots. Their evaluation was positive at personal level, but in 1990 *PLN* candidate Carlos Manuel Castillo lost to Rafael Angel Calderón (*PUSC*). Behind the loss lied the

[7] "Honduras: Pepe niega arreglo para restitución" *La Prensa*, 1 Nov. 2009.

party's incapacity to deal with increasing poverty: social democracy had failed to deliver. During the Calderón administration, *PLN* took opposition seriously and criticized *PUSC*'s economic plans, and the scheduled ratification of a third structural adjustment plan (*PAE III*) with international institutions. Once back in office, this strong stance against neoliberalism would come to haunt the party. Arías remained a powerful figure, with his interventions often reported by the media, weighing strongly on the national political discourse. He is still the best-known Costa Rican politician, and a Nobel Prize recipient for his role in the 1980s Central American peace agreements.

The route inside the party to the 1994 election included some spectacular internal confrontations. The main candidate was José Maria Figueres Olsen, son of the founder of *Partido Liberación Nacional*. He led the modernist current which had taken over the party after the 1992 Convention. In 1993, the new leadership anticipated the primaries for the local elections, to give a signal of strength. This decision was met with disapproval by the rest of the party, so much so that they were ultimately cancelled and repeated. The presence of two more strong Presidential pre-candidates, also highlighted the pre-existing fissures within the party. Former first lady Marguerita Peñon led the current of her husband Oscar Arias, and took on the cause of female participation, while well-known anti-drug trafficking lawyer Jorge Miguel Corrales, ran a more principled internal campaign and embodied the traditional values of solidarity and social justice within the party.

Already before 1994, the party was in a transitional phase, something which had also kept the internal competition high. Traditionally, *Liberación* had always been a top-heavy party, with a strong national leadership, which former president Daniel Oduber famously described as "*something more than an electoral machine, and something less than a political party*". The adoption of neoliberal policies during the 1980s had deep consequences for the ideological leaning of the party and it was compounded by the natural physical decline of some of its more radical historical leaders. The loss in the 1990 election accelerated the renovation. Reconciling continuity and innovation within the party proved to be a daunting task.

Ultimately, Figueres won the Presidential nomination and the national party organization rallied behind him. Notably, neither of his internal rivals endorsed him openly, further opening the door for internal dissent and for the party's fragmentation. The losing currents similarly chose not to explicitly bargain over the allocation of Congressional candidates, to avoid blame in case of a loss in 1994. Figueres also became the subject of personal attacks of *PUSC* during the months of the campaign. He was mostly targeted for his scarce experience and for allegations that he had been tangentially involved in the killing

of a young drug trafficker several years before (Fernandez, 1994). Figueres won the national election of February 6, 1994 by with a small but clear 1.9% margin in the Presidential vote, while *PLN* came on top with a 4.2% advantage in the Parliamentary vote, which is the focus of this work. The problem was that due to third parties' respectable performance, no single formation reached a parliamentary majority. In fact, *PLN* had to form a government having stopped one seat short (28) from an absolute majority in the 57-member Congress. Therefore, the government had to find a crutch in another party, for the first time in the history of the country. As no stable coalition agreement was found, all new cabinet members belonged to a *PLN* minority government. From the start, this practical reality was an obvious source of weakness, but also of division, since internal factions could use the government's lack of wide parliamentary support to their advantage.

3.1.4 – The Labour Party in the United Kingdom before April 1997

In the period the *METAnalysis* covers (1997-2001) the British parliamentary majority was constituted by the *Labour Party*. Under the *Conservative* premiership of John Major (1992-1997), *Labour* had undergone a deep internal transformation that was instrumental to overwhelming victory in 1997. This was the culmination of a gradual reconfiguration started during Neil Kinnock's leadership (1983-1992). John Smith took over after the 1992 defeat and continued this policy during his short tenure. Smith's unexpected death in 1994 opened the door for younger figures to rise to the top. Among the main contenders, Tony Blair was initially the outsider, but quickly built a positive image. Counting on a publicity advantage, he offered the post of *Shadow Chancellor*[8] to Gordon Brown, who accepted. Blair then gained the party leadership in June 1994. An agreement between the two young leaders avoided potentially divisive internal confrontations. Most crucially, this new leadership aimed to erase the ghost of economic crisis and mismanagement that accompanied McDonald, Attlee, Wilson and Callaghan's *Labour* cabinets.

The reconfiguration weakened the historical link to the trade unions, in favor of the adoption of a catch-all party mentality. In fact, it had even adopted a communication strategy where activists and public figures were encouraged to refer to the party as "New Labour" (Wood, 1999). In ideological terms, this corresponded to a move towards the

[8] government secretary in charge of the economy.

center of the political spectrum under the business-friendly "third way" approach which Blair cherished. The most important symbolical move was the amendment of Clause Four of the party's charter, which had formerly included a commitment to the nationalization of strategic industries. Once in government, the confirmation of moderate Gordon Brown as Chancellor was similarly finalized to creating an image of responsible financial management and a clean break with the past. Just as important was the silver lining in their 1992 loss, given the dramatic proportions of the "Black Wednesday" monetary crisis of 1993 (Butler and Kavanagh, 1999). Had *Labour* been in government, their reputation for bringing economic instability would have become unshakeable.

Clearly, the left-wing of the party had lost traction following the disintegration of the Soviet union. The internal takeover by the modernist current made the party comparatively stronger within the party system, and also gifted it with a higher degree of internal cohesion. That had historically never been the case for Labour governments, which had always been at the whim of the party on the ground. In fact, the transformation greatly strengthened the internal leadership, and reduced internal democracy (King and Bartle, 2002). The new leadership had handpicked a large number of the candidates that would had won seats in 1997 to be the face of a party that aimed to be "*a broad-based movement for progress and justice*" to directly quote the Blair's words from 1997. This notoriously included a large contingent of women being voted into Parliament, where they were sardonically dubbed by the media "*Blair's babes*".

Overall, then, the new *Labour* party approached its first term from a position of strength and unity. The desperate search of a return to power had generated a willingness to compromise, but to a significant increase in membership to 420,000. Old supporters linked to trade unions left the party and young members, identified with Blair's centrism, more than offset them. The structure of British society had changed and a working-class party seemed now sustainable. This success also reflected the party's professionalization and clear message in the 1997 campaign (Butler and Kavanagh, 1997). Experienced manager Peter Mandelson, ran a tight, coherent *Labour* campaign, making the right calls during the whole pre-election period. This included not holding a televised leadership debate, where *Blair*'s inexperience might have suffered against John Major's cultivated political language. The general election of 1997 saw *Labour*'s return to power after 18 years of Conservative governments. This reversal of fortunes had remarkable proportions. A landslide victory gave Tony Blair's new government an absolute majority of 179 seats, and the largest gap in vote shares (+12.5%) between them and the *Conservatives* since 1945.

3.2 – Tracing The Main Events Across The Cases

3.2.1 – The Gaullist majority in France from 1962 to 1967:

Growing competition in an expansive electoral revolution

TABLE 3.3 - FRANCE, 1962-1967
EVENTS affecting political COMPETITION through the MAJORITY

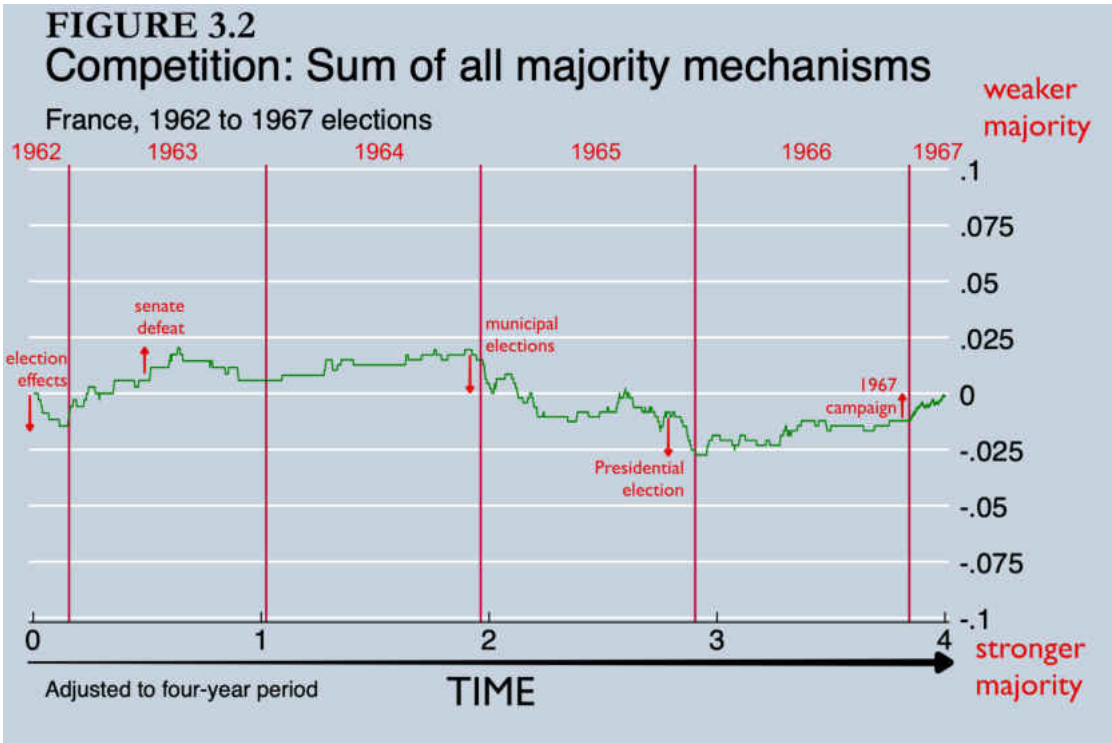
period	date	focusing event	sample?	sign	intensity
1	*[December 1962]*	unprecedented cohesion	yes	*negative*	-11.60%
6	*[June 1963]*	majority goes under in Senate	yes	*positive*	11.60%
20	*[December 1964]*	Municipal election alliances	yes	*negative*	-15.10%
22	*[March 1965]*	unity lists of the right	yes	*negative*	-12.70%
29	*[December 1965]*	endorsements for De Gaulle	yes	*negative*	-14.80%
33	*[June 1966]*	Poujade/D'Estaing centers of power	yes*	*positive*	10.80%
NA	*[January 1967]*	D'Estaing distances himself	no	*positive*	NA

MAIN SOURCES: *Le Monde (sample), Revue Française de Science Politique*
**not for the majority as a whole, but for "cohesion of the majority" mechanism*

In France, the 1962-1967 legislature saw a remarkably stable majority in the lead up to an expansive electoral revolution. In fact, Prime Minister Georges Pompidou remained in office for all five years, and most of the period was covered by one cabinet, which lasted for over three years between November 28, 1962 and January 8, 1966. The following cabinet lasted until the March 1967 election. This stability increased the legibility and clarity of the majority, compared with a more fragmented and chaotic the opposition. The evolution of the majority-related discourse which influenced competition saw over four different stages. One can identify: (i) a first couple of years of stability and institutionalization through the use of party discipline, leading (ii) into a Presidential election less favorable than De Gaulle would have hoped, but still positive for the majority followed by (iii) the end of the second Pompidou government, and the unexpected fragmentation caused by Giscard d'Estaing's declaration and (iv) having to face the eventuality of a loss during the 1967 campaign.

The French parliamentary majority of 1962-1967 was different from the past as it was composed of only three parties, two of which would soon merge. The *UNR* and the *UDT*, both creatures of De Gaulle's invention, competed as one formation in the two-rounds of both the 1962 and 1967 elections. The *Général* understood very early on that it was imperative that his consensus did not translate into a very large political majority. He had introduced a two-round system for parliament for the same reason. It was similarly important for Gaullism to go beyond the ideological right wing. And in this sense, *UNR*-

UDT was a modern catch-all party. Atypically for post-war Europe, it even included some former members of moderate left-wing parties. The third formation inside the majority were the *Républicains Indépendents*. This small party was made by the more modernist half of the former *Independent* party, the other half of which retained the *CNIP* name and went to the opposition.



The Gaullist majority came out of the election with a general impression of strength and cohesion, as the result was even better than expected.[9] At 238 MPs, the Gaullists were only 4 seats short of an absolute majority in the *Assemblée*, while they still had to count on centrist help in the less important *Sénat* (Lavau, 1963). Still, this multiparty majority of the 1958-62 period had to seek compromise at a series of critical junctures. The Gaullist parties' victory in 1962 consolidated their power, separating them from the center and favoring the transition of the *UNR-UDT* from a cadre party to an organization rooted in the territory. It reached 83,000 members in 1963, which put it at the same level of the *SFIO* (Charlot, 1967), an impressive result for a party founded to compete in the 1958 election. The first contentious issues that broke the election's equilibrium showed the internal divisions of the *UNR-UDT* were the long debate around the creation of the *Court of State Security*[10] and the proposed prorogation of the *Military Court of Justice*,[11] which Prime

[9] Fauvet, Jacques. "LE GAULLISME ET L'OPPOSITION." *Le Monde*, 11 Dec. 1962.
[10] *Cour de Sureté de l'Ètat*
[11] *Cour militaire de justice*

Minister Pompidou was reluctant to put to a vote of confidence, fearing defeat.[12] The anti-inflation measures proposed by Minister of Finance Valéry Giscard d'Éstaing, were likewise criticized by the majority in the *Assemblée*,[13] before a final agreement on general budgetary issues came at the end of the year, only three days before deadline.[14] Despite these internal fights, the first year of the new government was stable, and De Gaulle's authority never in question.

Criticism of the majority also came from outside of the party system. In March 1964 the main student organizations staged large public protests against the government's economic and social policy agenda.[15] The cabinet dismissed these protests as the work of extremists, but that was hardly the case. Although left-wing organizations such as *FGEL*[16] participated, the moderate *UNEF*[17] had taken the lead. Also, the movement started in Paris at the Sorbonne, but then extended throughout the country. The opposition naturally sided with the protesters. The *PSU* weekly *Tribune Socialiste* commented on how, with the parliament sidelined, the only effective way to disagree with the government's actions was to take to the streets.[18] A common criticism moved against the majority from the center and the left lied in its excessive focus on foreign policy, both in Europe and within the Cold War balance of power.[19] This was seen as a way to compensate for the loss of Algeria, by trying to increase the European prestige of France. Then in the summer, the apparent failure of economic policy, visible through a rise in inflation and a poor performance of the stock markets was similarly blamed on the government.[20]

Why then did the discourse on the majority remain balanced in this phase? Through most of 1964, the strength of the majority lied in the unwillingness of general De Gaulle to act as the arbiter of French politics. Rather than as an institutional figure, he spoke as a political chief. The lack of separation of powers between the executive and the *Assemblée* and the success of an internal policy of party discipline helped the institutionalization of the *UNR-UDT*.[21] The *Gaullist* party's growth was remarkable in an environment where

[12] Laurens, André. "M Pompidou Ne Voulait Pas Avoir Air De Poser La Question De Confiance." *Le Monde*, 15 Feb. 1963.
[13] Viasson-Ponté, Pierre. "LA DISCUSSION SUR LE COLLECTIF Se Déroule En Fait Entre Le Gouvernement Et Sa Majorité." *Le Monde*, 30 May 1963.
[14] Viasson-Ponté, Pierre. "LE BUDGET A ÉTÉ VOTÉ Avec Trois Jours D'avance Les Leçons Du Débat." *Le Monde*, 9 Dec. 1963.
[15] Hubert, Jacques "FRANCE-OBSERVATEUR : une demi-défaite." *Le Monde* 2 Mar. 1964
[16] *Fédération des Groupes d'Études de Lettres*, of Marxist inspiration.
[17] *Union National des Étudiants de France*
[18] Puisais, Harris "TRIBUNE SOCIALISTE (P.S.U.) : l'heure de l'action directe." *Le Monde*, 2 Mar. 1964
[19] "M. GUY MOLLET : le général se désintéresse de la politique intérieure." *Le Monde*, 24 Mar. 1964
[20] Les hebdomadaires s'interrogent sur la politique économique et intérieure du régime. *Le Monde*, 6 Jul. 1964
[21] "LE CENTRE RÉPUBLICAIN: De Gaulle Nie La Démocratie." *Le Monde*, 10 Feb. 1964.

continuous fractures were the norm, and Maurice Duverger wrote that *De Gaulle* could be remembered as the "federator" of the right.[22] The resilience that Gaullism showed after the death of its creator shows the accuracy of this prediction. Late in the year, the creation of *ad hoc* alliances for the forthcoming mayoral elections – which indirectly elected the Senate – showed that the majority and the center-right opposition still depended upon each other. The municipal campaign reinforced the majority by offering an occasion to show unity and strength, fielding joint candidates under either *UNR-UDT* or *Républicains Indépendants* symbols, and benefiting in many cases from the support of the *MRP*.[23]

Then the third of the four sample periods, covering 1965 and early 1966, was the most positive for the majority with 43 out of 75 articles showing it as strong or cohesive. The early 1965 municipal elections were an important stress test, especially because the old parties were still locally strong. In spite of criticisms to the Gaullist policy agenda and some losses in major cities, the *UNR-UDT* candidates did not lose ground. On the other hand, as Jean Lecaunet noted then, the two-round municipal elections had resulted in a real patchwork of alliances. In many cities, such as Toulouse, Marseille and Grenoble, centrist candidatures supported by all parties except for Gaullists and Communists had seemed viable, and had stopped the majority from gaining ground. This also meant that the Senate, which would be partially renewed by an electoral college in September 1965, remained solidly pluralistic and Gaston Monnerville would remain its leader. The majority's control over the institutions was therefore still partial, and any risk of authoritarianism kept at bay. Still, the maintenance of party discipline was impressive for a country until then characterized by weak and unstable parliamentary majorities.

The Gaullists had a problematic run-up to the first ever Presidential elections, scheduled for November 1965. In the General's mind, this election would have consolidated their power. Yet, appearance of a far-right presidential candidate, former Pétain collaborator Jean-Louis Tixier-Vignancour, eroded part of their support, and had a strong appeal on some local MPs of the majority.[24] Jean Lecaunet had a similar role in keeping the centrist campaigns focused around a non-gaullist candidate[25] and basically offering a more Europe- and growth-oriented conservatism. These candidatures had the

[22] Duverger, Maurice. "LE FEDERATEUR DE LA DROITE." *Le Monde*, 15 Oct. 1964.
[23] "À PARIS, LES RÉPUBLICAINS INDÉPENDANTS FERONT LISTE COMMUNE AVEC L'U.N.R."*Le Monde*, 18 Jan. 1965.
[24] "M. TIXIER-VIGNANCOUR : J'ai Déjà L'accord De plus De Cent Maires Et Conseillers Généraux." *Le Monde*, 11 Oct. 1965.
[25] "Ma Doctrine Est Celle De l' " État Serviteur Des Hommes ", DÉCLARE M. LECANUET A BOULOGNE-BILLANCOURT." *Le Monde*, 5 Nov. 1965.

explicit goal of sending De Gaulle to the second round.[26] Their presence on the national stage signaled a fragmentation of the right that Mitterrand, the most accredited non-gaullist, could pick up on during his press interviews.[27] Former *OAS* members Jacques Soustelle and Georges Bideault also encouraged a non-gaullist vote, and so did the French of Algeria association, which had felt betrayed by De Gaulle. As the Presidential election approached, a second round looked possible, especially since the name of the Gaullist candidate was not known yet. It might look odd from a contemporary perspective that the President did not make up his mind about running until only a month before the first ever direct presidential elections in the history of France. De Gaulle would have turned 75 just before the election, and would have been 82 at the end of another seven-year term. As a loyal Prime Minister for three years Georges Pompidou was the most accredited to replace the General, yet his position was considered perhaps too political.[28] De Gaulle chose not to take any chances, and his decision to run again initially galvanized his political base, with the initial polls giving him a first-round victory (Goguel, 1966). As the campaign went by, though, this impression of strength slowly faded.

The first round results of the Presidential election temporarily weakened the majority. The good performance of all opposition candidates was met with surprise in France and abroad, as general De Gaulle only received 44.65% of polls a few points below an absolute majority.[29] This forced him to compete in a run-off against François Mitterrand, who obtained 31.72%. Just like in 1962, and despite three years of stability, *Gaullism* was still not hegemonic. In addition Jean Lecaunet gathered 15.57% and Tixier-Vignancour 5.20%: both could claim that they had taken the General to the second round. Nevertheless, De Gaulle's second-round victory with 55.2% of preferences put his party in the position to complete the legislature. Again, the majority's strength questioned for a brief period during the Presidential campaign's lead-up, but then everything returned into full control.

Throughout 1966, 31 articles (7%) in the sample dealt with the majority's strength and cohesion, and 14 portrayed it positively. This was worse than in previous years, and it coincided with the fall of the second Pompidou government, and the creation of a third cabinet under his lead. The concerns of the *Republicains Indépendents* were given ample media

[26] "M TIXIER-VIGNANCOUR mon but est de mettre de Gaulle en ballottage." *Le Monde*, 15 Jun. 1965
[27] "Le député de la Nièvre: il n'est pas mauvais pour moi qu'il y ait beaucoup de candidats à droite." *Le Monde*, 4 Oct. 1965
[28] Pompidou eventually would become president, but only after the long unrest of 1968, and after the General's health conditions deteriorated severely. He then died in office in 1974.
[29] "BERNE : De Gaulle N'a Pas Retrouvé à Gauche Les Voix Perdues Sur L'Europe." *Le Monde*, 7 Dec. 1965.

coverage. Through their leader Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, they were trying to carve an independent political niche from the *UNR-UDT*, and affirm themselves as a modern centrist formation with pro-European inclinations.[30] Giscard d'Estaing had gained notoriety as Minister of Finances, and had been the public face of a controversial stabilization plan before resigning in January 1966. A self-proclaimed pragmatist, he publicly hated ideologies and advocated against his coalition partners for the importance of local candidates (Kessler, 1966). The Gaullists condemned his creation of separate parliamentary groups both in the *Assemblée* and the *Sénat*, and that his party ran many separate candidates in the upcoming elections. Yet, they could not do without his support.[31]

In the final year internal divisions damaged the majority. Until 1966, Gaullism had mostly been a one-man show, and Pompidou's disregard for internal democracy had only reinforced De Gaulle's leadership. In the last part of the legislature, Giscard d'Éstaing became the one component that did not fit the script. This was a remarkable change in comparison to 1965, when the positive results in the municipal elections, and a cohesive, ultimately successful presidential campaign had built positive momentum for the majority. Therefore, although certainly still strong, the majority finished the legislature at its most divided since 1962. Also, it would have been more beneficial for the majority to hold the legislative election right after De Gaulle's victory in the popular vote. The hypothesis of a snap election was contemplated in early 1966, but then discarded because the Constitution would have then denied the possibility of dissolving the Parliament for another year (Goguel, 1967). The consideration of a different path to elect a new parliament is a counterfactual in support of the idea that the majority felt weak. Its leaders were worried that things could turn ugly and wanted to avoid mistakes.

Out of the 409 articles collected for early 1967, the lion's share (124, or 30%) referred explicitly to the majority. Until then the opposition had taken center stage, but because of the December agreement between the *Fédération* and the *PCF*, the media started asking whether the majority was strong enough to resist the challenge of a unified left. Of those 124 articles, 76 presented a weakened, less cohesive majority, that arrived to the election knowing that losing was not unlikely anymore. Also, the decision to present unified candidatures under the *V Republique* banner, had not become the status quo. Particularly important in creating an impression of internal division was *Valery Giscard D'Estaing*'s

[30]"LE COMMUNIQUÉ." *Le Monde*, 27 Jan. 1966.
[31] G., A. "Les " Giscardiens " Du Sénat Constituent Une Amicale." *Le Monde*, 24 June 1966.

notorious "*oui, mais*"[32] speech, where he distanced himself from the government's politics and created a platform for transversal opinions from politicians.[33] Such declaration immediately triggered a reaction from General De Gaulle, who rebuked his ally and remarked that it is impossible to govern by relying upon "but".[34]

While the controversy was recomposed quickly, it was not the sole disagreement within the majority. In these last months the *gauche Gaulliste* wavered in its support to the Pompidou government, and in several occasions they voted against it. In response, it was penalized in its candidate allocation within the coalition. Also controversial was the candidature of self-exiled historian and former *OAS* member, Jacques Soustelle, who was waiting to return to France.[35] The support that he received from the top levels of government indicated a will to stretch the majority as far to the right as possible since the space in the center was taken. Jean Lecaunet's *Centre Democrate* had flirted with the Gaullists across the campaign, since the alliance of the left had isolated it. It never became officially part of the *V*ème *Republique* umbrella on the official ballots, but it would participate in the new parliamentary majority after the election.[36] The issue was that its political base reacted less than enthusiastically to the idea of allying with the Gaullists. The refusal of the *Centre Democrate* candidate in the Rhone, Génety, to comply with party instructions and retire in front of the Soustelle candidature also showed that many centrist politicians were ill-at-ease with any alliance with the Gaullists.[37]

The opposition sought to discredit the majority at the campaign's end, and interpreted a speech by Alain Peyrefitte – former minister for Information – as a signal of creeping dictatorship. The majority's politician had said that under no circumstance the left's electoral victory would have led it to government. De Gaulle's would never have called on those that had fought his regime to lead the country.[38] This event clearly showed the partisan cleavage lines inside the discourse on national institutions, and continued of a conversation that had unfolded over ten years. The trust that the majority put in De

[32] in English: "yes, but"
[33] Viasson-Ponté, Pierre. "M. Giscard D'Estaing Précise Les Thèmes Des Républicains Indépendants." *Le Monde*, 11 Jan. 1967.
[34] Viasson-Ponté, Pierre. "LA CAMPAGNE ÉLECTORALE DE LA MAJORITÉ " On Ne Gouverne Pas Avec Des Mais... " Déclare Le Général De Gaulle." *Le Monde*, 12 Jan. 1967.
[35] "M. Soustelle Demande : Oui Ou Non, Pourrai-Je Me Présenter Librement Aux Suffrages De Mes Concitoyens ?" *Le Monde*, 20 Jan. 1967.
[36] Viasson-Ponté, Pierre. "M Lecanuet Demande Au Général De Gaulle De Préciser Dès Maintenant Lu Politique Que Fera Lu Majorité Après Les Élections." *Le Monde*, 16 Feb. 1967.
[37] Duverger, Maurice. "La Campagne Électorale Prend Une Ampleur Exceptionnelle Le Candidat Du Centre Démocrate Refuse De Se Retirer Devant M Soustelle L'AVENIR DU PARLEMENTARISME MAJORITAIRE." *Le Monde*, 20 Feb. 1967.
[38] "SI LES OPPOSITIONS L'EMPORTAIENT... Pour Gouverner, Le Général De Gaulle Ne Ferait Pas Appel à Des Hommes Qui Combattent Sa Politique Déclare M. Alain Peyrefitte." *Le Monde*, 21 Feb. 1967.

Gaulle's Presidency and in the possibility of using Article 16 of the Constitution to stop a Communist-led government, showed that the majority felt weak and afraid of losing. A week before the election, the President spoke to the nation, an unconstitutional political act from the head of state, warning the electorate that democracy was in danger (if his majority was not confirmed). This controversial intervention was yet another sign of Gaullist vulnerability.[39] Clearly, the majority's needed this election to confirm a policy agenda, especially in foreign affairs, that many inside its coalition disapproved. The final result of the 1967 legislative contest allowed the *UNR-UDT* to continue in government, but it forced to rely on the help on Jean Lecaunet's *Centre Democrate* to keep a parliamentary majority.

3.2.2 – The Partido Nacional majority in Honduras from 2009 to 2013: Growing competition in an expansive electoral revolution

TABLE **3.4** - HONDURAS, 2009-2013
EVENTS affecting political COMPETITION through the MAJORITY

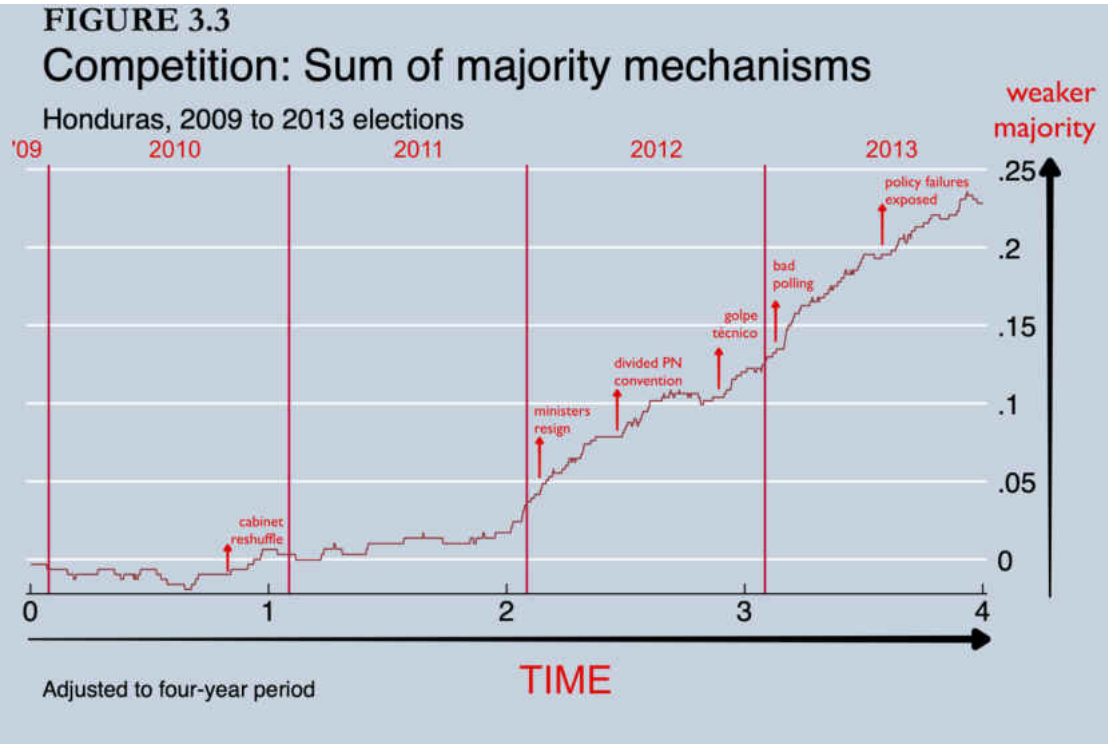
period	date	focusing event	sample?	sign	intensity
10	*[November 2010]*	cabinet reshuffle announcement	yes	*positive*	12.78%
21	*[December 2011]*	Lobo international travel	yes	*positive*	19.79%
22	*[February 2012]*	Ministerial resignations	yes	*positive*	18.48%
24	*[April 2012]*	divided PN convention	yes	*positive*	13.86%
26	*[July 2012]*	agrarian conflict	yes	*positive*	13.86%
32	*[January 2013]*	negative opinion polls	yes	*positive*	22.73%
33	*[March 2013]*	bad economic record	yes	*positive*	12.63%
34	*[March 2013]*	internal divisions to PN	yes	*positive*	12.63%
35	*[April 2013]*	security policy failure	yes	*positive*	17.68%
37	*[July 2013]*	anti-government protests	yes	*positive*	15.15%
38	*[August 2013]*		yes	*positive*	10.10%

MAIN SOURCES: *La Prensa, Revista Envio, Diario de la Conflictividad*

Starting the account of Honduras in chronological order, the data shows that in 2010, the discourse about the new governmental majority was balanced between positive and negative. On December 2 the new Congress voted against Zelaya's reinstatement, under pressure from the PN leadership, even if president-elect Lobo was in favor. On December

[39] Fauvet, Jacques. "LE CANDIDAT." *Le Monde*, 28 Feb. 1967.

22 the *TSE* declared Lobo's victory official,[40] and he started his term with an encouraging 83% approval rating, due to his friendly, open demeanor and to the normalizing effect of his election. Lobo was forced to travel abroad during his first year, in an diplomatic effort targeted towards international organizations, appalled at the escalation of violence after the *coup*. Many early decisions were taken with the negotiation of Honduras' return in the international community in mind. While the United States had congratulated the winner, the *OEA* still insisted on Zelaya's now uncertain return, as the new government's installation made his restoration unlikely.



Democratic institutions restarted in January 2010, as Micheletti left the *interim* Presidency. Lobo immediately declared an amnesty for coup perpetrators, a costly compromise which mitigated the chances of a second coup by allowing the *golpistas* to keep some power. Lobo then created a national unity government, to create a network of alliances and reassure the international community. The smaller parties enthusiastically accepted to participate in the cabinet and share the *Junta Directora* of Congress. *UD* leader Cesar Ham received the *INA* (*Instituto Nacional de Agricoltura*) Ministry, former unionist Óscar Escalante (*PDC*) the *Industry* and *Commerce* job, and Arturo Corrales of *PDC* became Minister for the *Plan de Nación*. Last, Bernard Martinez (*PINU*) oversaw *Art, Culture and Sports*. This attempt to repair the democratic credentials of Honduras came at a price, as

[40] TSE oficializa el triunfo de Lobo con declaratoria #22 *La Prensa* 22 December 2009

the minor parties' inexperience weakened the majority, and their ministries became little party feuds. Cesar Ham and Arturo Corrales became important majority figures. Ham supported the fight of the *campesinos* in the *Bajo Aguán*, not without ambiguities, but always riling the landed elites. Lobo often had to defend him directly.[41] Conversely, Corrales accumulated power, moving across different governmental offices.

Keeping the majority united proved a hard task given how the national unity project included the appointment of *Liberal* deputies in the *Nacional*-controlled ministries. Such an arrangement was unprecedented in the Honduran context, and the *PN* right-wing opposed it. In exchange, it received the economic appointments, which were all linked to ex-president Ricardo Maduro. Elena Mondragón led the *Central Bank of Honduras*, William Chong Wang resumed his tenure at the Ministry of Finance, Arturo Bendaña chaired the *Health Ministry*. Other currents were also rewarded, with *SOPTRAVI* (*Transport&Infrastructure*) to Miguel Pastor, and the *Chancellorship* (Foreign Affairs) to media entrepreneur Mario Canahuati. The other battle inside the *Partido Nacional* was for Congress Leadership, where Lobo imposed Juan Orlando Hernandez, while the Education post went to veteran teachers' manager Alejandro Ventura, who immediately had to deal with teachers' strikes.[42]

Despite of attempts of internal appeasement, majority fragmentation was always behind the corner. Usually, whichever party won the Presidency allocated ministries among its internal currents. Just like his *National* predecessor Ricardo Maduro in 2002, Lobo was betraying this unwritten rule, undermining party unity, and infuriating *Nacional* MPs[43](Lisón, 2014). Consequently, Ricardo Álvarez – Tegucigalpa mayor and official *PN* leader – criticized Lobo, constantly accusing him of leftist sympathies and of being too friendly with the *zelayistas*. In February 2010, Álvarez ordered *PN* members to storm all offices where the deputy was a *Liberal*, for an intimidating show of strength. Needing support, Lobo called all social constituencies to consult with his government for creating a Constitutional Assembly that could write Zelaya's promised reform in late 2010. The far right *CD* refused, accusing the President to be playing the left's game, so did the *Resistencia*, suspicious of Lobo. Meanwhile, pockets of the Honduran state had remained unaltered after the *golpe*. In particular, the *golpistas* had picked the *Fiscal General* (Attorney General) Luis Rubí. His consent was necessary to Zelaya's return, so Lobo intended to fire him. The

[41] "Otros no hacen ni m..." dice presidente Lobo en defensa de Ham #200 *La Prensa* 28 July 2012
[42] Padres presionan a Alejandro Ventura #139 *La Prensa* 1 May 2010
[43] Divorcio entre ministros y diputados oficialistas #259 *La Prensa* 26 September 2010

Corte Suprema de Justicia deliberated that Congress was only Constitutionally empowered to nominate the *Fiscal General*, not to fire him. This violation of the separation of powers weakened Lobo's government.

Overall, in the first year, the majority was still stable and early polls gave *PN* a 10% advantage.[44] Yet, the military and the *PN* right wing were appalled by the President's early decisions and criticized the him daily, especially for rising murder rates.[45] Internally, the police had abused its power after the *golpe*, and new Security Minister Óscar Álvarez spent months trying to clear its ranks. Security would always prove elusive, with Lobo even fearing for his life, as already in June 2010 he declared that he knew who his enemies were and where he could find them.[46] At Lobo's side, President of Congress Juan Orlando Hernández was fundamental in getting laws passed by mediating with *Liberal* and *Nacional* currents. He kept internal discipline, hoping Lobo would endorse his 2013 candidature (Lisón, 2014). By October 2010, the President's approval ratings were still positive, but they had fallen to 54%. Then in November the announcement of a cabinet reshuffle damaged the government.[47]

The second year was also balanced for the majority. The slight weakness indicated by the 57% positive coding was mostly due to events happening in late 2011. The last moment of real majority strength came in January 2011,[48] when the constitutional reform regulating plebiscites and referendums was passed, with 103 MPs in favor. This was a victory for Hernandez, and took away one of the *golpe*'s long-standing issues. A second project, aimed at development and employment, were the so-called "charter cities" (*ciudades modelo*), promoted by American economist Paul Romer. It was unsuccessful, due to the *CSJ's* strong objection to the Constitutionality of areas that suspended the labor code. The media reported that Lobo had started to think about how to curtail the supreme judges.[49] A third major policy decentralized education over 298 local governments, to cut off the corrupt central administration. This inflamed the teachers' unions, which saw power being taken from educators given to often incompetent municipalities. Tegucigalpa mayor Ricardo Álvarez, opportunistically sided with the striking teachers, antagonizing Hernandez and declaring that *PN* was a divided party.[50] Then Lobo proposed a *Security Tax* on financial

[44] Partido Nacional supera por diez puntos al Liberal #163 *La Prensa* 1 June 2010
[45] Asesinatos de periodistas revelan fallas del Gobierno #209 *La Prensa* 27 July 2010
[46] Porfirio Lobo: "Los tengo ubicaditos a todos" #169 *La Prensa* 9 June 2010
[47] Lobo a ministros: "Se las tengo apuntadas toditas" #300 La Prensa 12 November 2012
[48] Listo proyecto de reformas del Art. 5 constitucional #8 *La Prensa* 8 January 2011
[49] Presidente Lobo busca enjuiciar al Poder Judicial #186 *La Prensa* 3 August 2011
[50] Nacionalistas sin unión, dice Ricardo Álvarez #55 *La Prensa* 9 March 2011

transactions to increase policy budgets, which offended the entrepreneurial sectors, with a disgusted Adolfo *"Fito"* Facussé of *ANDI* (*Associacion Nacional de Industriales*) comparing him to Zelaya.

Democratic normalization was finally reached on May 25, 2011. In Cartagena, Colombia, a political agreement was signed allowing for Zelaya's official return into the country, at the presence of the Venezuelan and Colombian leaders. The government tried to take credit for the former President's peaceful transition out of exile, while the *zelayistas'* return increased the pressure for Constitutional reform. As the *PN*'s right wing abhorred Lobo's soft stance, 50 *PN* central committee members formally distanced themselves from the Assembly project.[51] The division became official when Ricardo Álvarez and Miguel Pastor launched a new political alliance within *PN*.[52]

Then a new scandal damaged the government. On September 22, the son of the *rectora* of the *UNAH* (*Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Honduras*) *Julieta Castellanos*, was killed together with a friend. Rapid investigations brought to the incarceration of four policemen. The escape of two of them on September 31 triggered a wave of anti-government protests, targeting police corruption and its involvement in the drug traffic. As late 2011 police clean-ups failed, and this basically ended the political career of security Minister Oscar Álvarez, who had received the most *Nacional* Congressional preferences in 2008. Meanwhile the constant corruption inside of *ENEE* (electricity agency) or *HONDUTEL* was making public expenditure unsustainable. In November 2011, as Honduras was struggling with import and fuel costs after the *IMF* mission had left without a memorandum, Lobo travelled to Venezuela, to negotiate readmission into *PetroCaribe*. Ricardo Álvarez accused him to be a new Zelaya, and the *PN* right wing organized as a separate Parliamentary group with 20 members, *Alianza Parlamentaria.*[53] In sum, 2011 frustrated the administration's ambitious agenda, with the discourse on the majority deteriorating in the second half. The government's weakness was public, even if anybody would have had a hard time in Lobo's shoes, due to lack of funding and administrative corruption.[54]

In 2012 things got even worse, with the party becoming extremely divided internally. In the sample, the first two years had been relatively balanced. During this third year, 57/72 articles (79%) negatively depicted the administration and the *Partido Nacional*.

[51] Nacionalistas exponen sus inquietudes a Lobo #162 *La Prensa* 13 July 2011
[52] Se oficializa la división en el Partido Nacional #234 *La Prensa* 29 September 2011
[53] Alianza Parlamentaria forma la sexta bancada en el Congreso de Honduras #249 *La Prensa* 31 October 2011
[54] Lobo, entre los presidentes aplazados #282 *La Prensa* 12 December 2011

Early on, a massive cabinet reshuffling,[55] dethroned two key Ministers, William Chong Wang[56] and Alejandro Ventura. Chong, politically close to Maduro and Álvarez, had been unable to create financial sustainability, and was replaced by Hector "Tito" Guillén. In parallel, Ventura had failed to meet the striking teachers' demands and was substituted by Marlon Escoto, an open *anti-golpista* and member of the *Resistencia*. His nomination raised many brows in the majority, while Lobo claimed he was perfect for fighting the corrupt education bureaucracy. When his party accused him to be improvising,[57] the President responded that Ministers "*made him want to cry*".[58]

Then, in the lead-up to the *Nacionales* primaries', Ricardo Álvarez and Miguel Pastor lamented the power of president of Congress Juan Orlando Hernandez, and his neglect of the party base. In the March 2012 pre-Presidential polls, Hernandez was in third place behind Castro and Nasralla, a negative forecast which further alarmed the *PN* elites. Fearing internal divisions, *Nacional* ex-presidents Ricardo Maduro and Rafaél Callejas offered to mediate, and met with the three main presidential aspirants in March. These attempts bore little results, and the party convention scheduled for late March had to be postponed. It was finally held in La Ceiba on April 28, but Pastor and Álvarez deserted it, leaving the Hernandez current and the two former presidents as main speakers, a further embarrassment.[59]

Then the national unity government came under more pressure in May 2012 when Cesar Ham started the long-awaited return of *Azunosa* lands to the *campesinos* to whom they legally belonged. Together with the aforementioned *Security Tax* (known as "*el tazón*") it was seen as too similar to Zelaya's policies, and the landowning class complained, calling *Lobo* a populist. In July, the agrarian conflict escalated, and Álvarez vehemently spoke against the *campesinos*. Lobo had to publicly state that they were not terrorists in arms.[60] The President was also frustrated with the *Corte Suprema de Justicia*, which had stopped a new 1% tax on top income earners, and a provision favoring larger churches over smaller, entrepreneurially oriented congregations. Thirteen of the fifteen *CSJ* judges were still compromised with the *golpe*, and served the *PL* and *PN* elites who had elected them in 2009, and who did not like Lobo. In June, when Marlon Escoto fired 11 corrupt bureaucrats inside the Education ministry, and the *CSJ* mandated their reintegration. Then

[55] Lobo anuncia que habrán modificaciones en su Gobierno #25 *La Prensa* 27 January 2012
[56] Presidente Lobo acepta renuncia de ministro de Finanzas de Honduras #48 *La Prensa* 13 February 2012
[57] "Lobo improvisa en nombramientos" #65 *La Prensa* 26 February 2012
[58] "Tristeza y ganas de llorar" le provocan ministros a Presidente Lobo #178 *La Prensa* 10 July 2012
[59] Convención nacionalista evidenció división azul #105 *La Prensa* 28 April 2012
[60] Orellana, Xiomara "Un campesino no tiene nada que hacer con una AK-47": Lobo *La Prensa* 26 July 2012

Lobo proposed a *Ley Anti-Evasion* (*against tax evasion*), showing that 99% of tax exemptions did not go to *NGOs*, but benefited private economic activities. The *CSJ*, argued that the law was unconstitutional. In August a scandal linked to the shrimp industry sank the new Finance minister Tito Guillén, and to appease the party, he was replaced with Wilfredo Cerrato, son of an old guard *Nacionalista*. By fall, the government was in gridlock, with primary campaigning in full steam, while a liberal use of Congress allocations exhausted most of the 2012 budget in late October. The cabinet reshuffling had not helped, and a poll reported that 66% of Hondurans disapproved of public management even if the *Nacional* party kept a 7% advantage over *LibRe*.[61] [62]

The *Nacionales* faced their internal troubles in the November 2012 primaries. Hernandez got Lobo's endorsement, while Ricardo Álvarez and Miguel Pastor both ran, damaging each other's chances. Hernandez won the nomination through simple plurality (45%), while Álvarez beat expectations at 38% and Pastor finished third with 12%. Overall, Hernandez's current had a strong showing in the countryside, and controlled most local *PN* candidatures. Then, unexpectedly, Ricardo Álvarez filed an official complaint with the *TSE (Tribunal Supremo Electoral)* where he asked for a full ballot recount.[63] The Tribunal refused, but Álvarez persisted. He presented a "*protection appeal*" (*recurso de ámparo*) to the *Supreme Court of Justice* (CSJ), with proof of manipulation against him in several polling stations. Fearing for his Presidential aspirations, Hernandez saw an occasion to settle the score with the *Supreme Court of Justice*, which had constantly hindered the majority's plans. In an unprecedented Congressional vote, 97 MPs voted to remove the four judges of the *Sala Constitucional* (the most powerful part of *CSJ*), once again violating the separation of powers. The judges protested vehemently, but in vain.[64] The last *golpistas* within the *Nacionales* voted against this "*golpe tecnico*": Ana Julia Garcia, padre Mario Barahona, and Congress vice-President Antonio Rivera Callejas, who had remained fiercely against Zelaya's return. The rest of the party was reined in, and important laws were finally passed in January 2013, starting from the *charter cities*.

The last year of Lobo's administration was just as negative as 2012, with 59 out of 75 majority-coded articles describing it as weak or divided. At the same time, after the *golpe tecnico PN* recomposed its internal fracture, at least in public.[65] Yet, under current

[61] El 66% de los hondureños desaprueba la gestión del presidente Lobo #278 *La Prensa* 2 October 2012
[62] Partido Nacional continúa arriba en encuestas #279 *La Prensa* 2 October 2012
[63] "Queremos que conteo sea voto por voto": Álvarez #364 *La Prensa* 20 November 2012
[64] "Honduras: Magistrados de la CSJ le contestan a Porfirio Lobo" *La Prensa* 5 Dec. 2012
[65] "Miguel Pastor espera llamada de JOH para sumarse a campaña" *La Prensa* 17 Jul. 2013

Constitutional provisions a losing primary candidate could not be a Presidential running mate. Thanks to a Congressional compromise with the *Liberales*, an amendment was passed and Álvarez ran with Hernandez in 2013.

On May 24, the *TSE* officially called for a November election. A new wave of pre-electoral polls followed, all giving Xiomara Castro the first place, and Juan Orlando Hernandez took turns with Salvador Nasralla in the second spot. The majority still had some catching up to do. Hernandez had built an image of responsibility and efficiency, but some skepticism had risen among his supporters, who had seen how ruthlessly he could act in occasion of the *golpe técnico*. On June 14, he officially left the Congress Presidency to campaign around the country, then he took the spotlight in July, with a proposal to create 5,000 special Military Police. This openly clashed with Security secretary Corrales' beliefs in community-based policing and with the *CRSP*'s argument that militarization had caused the problem to begin with. Hernandez kept pursuing this project despite the criticism and included it in his campaign platform,[66] while painting a picture of chaos after the *zelayistas'* eventual victory.[67]

In August anti-government protests and widespread criticism targeted the administration's poor economic, security and healthcare policy record.[68] [69] By September 2013, Hernandez and Xiomara Castro had become a constant media presence, and opinion polling put either of them in the first place. The last firework to convince people to vote for the *Nacionales*, was the largest anti-drug trafficking operation in the country's history. The government, acting upon American intelligence, claimed it would confiscate assets belonging to a powerful drug transport groups, known as *Los Cachíros*, valued around 800 million US$. Last, in October Fito Facussé of the *Industrials' Association* accused the government of having hired *LATINCOM* for electronic voting communications only to secure another term. Since *LATINCOM* had previously committed fraud towards the national telephone company, the suspicions seemed credible.

The majority failed to improve its position during 2013. Although its unity increased, and the judicial branch was reined in, in the national discourse about competition the *Partido Nacional* had become much weaker than it had been in 2009. The administration had not accomplished much during these four years, and the possibility of an electoral loss created uncertainty, fundamental for driving people to the polls. The

[66] "Juan Orlando seguirá defendiendo la Policía Militar en Honduras" *La Prensa* 3 Nov. 2013
[67] "Juan Orlando: Libre amenaza la patria" *La Prensa* 25 Aug. 2013
[68] "Nueva estrategia de seguridad "no es más que política de campaña electoral"" *La Prensa* 13 Aug. 2013
[69] "Enfermeras hondureñas protestan frente a la secretaría de Salud" *La Prensa* 21 Aug. 2013

general election of November 24, 2013 was largely pacific. Turnout was extremely high for Honduras at 61% of registered voters, and bringing the contested victory of Juan Orlando Hernandez with almost 37% of preferences. At the same time, the *Nacionales* only gathered 48 out of 128 Congressional seats, coming first but with a dismal 33.6% of the total vote. This meant that unlike Lobo, Hernandez was actually obliged to form a multi-party government, and that the victory had come only because the main opposition parties had run as three separate formations.

3.2.3 – The PLN majority in Costa Rica from 1994 to 1998

Falling competition in a restrictive electoral revolution

TABLE 3.5 - COSTA RICA, 1994-1998
EVENTS affecting political COMPETITION through the MAJORITY

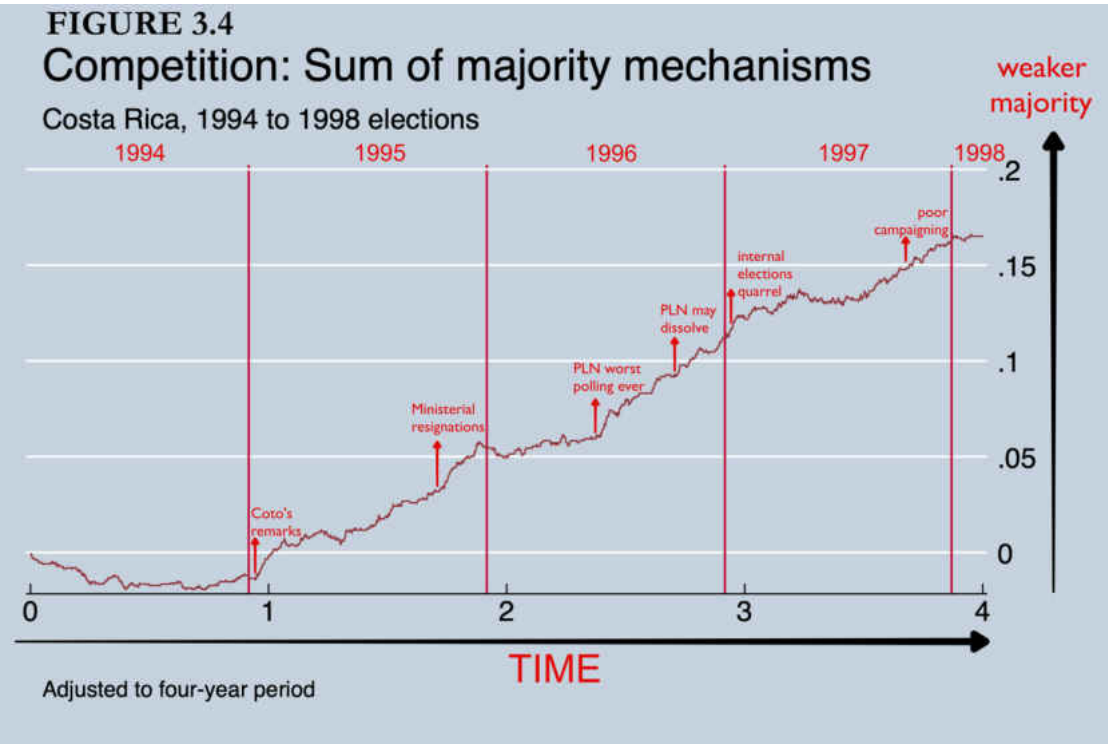
period	date	focusing event	sample?	sign	intensity
NA	*[December 1994]*	Walter Coto complains	no	*positive*	NA
18	*[October 1995]*	Rodriguez and Castro resign	yes	*positive*	15.10%
25	*[June 1996]*	PLN worst polling ever	yes	*positive*	16.80%
28	*[October 1996]*	PLN death knell	yes	*positive*	11.80%
30	*[January 1997]*	direct election suspended	yes	*positive*	12.10%
NA	*[June 1997]*	Corrales wins primaries	no	*negative*	NA
NA	*[November 1997]*	small campaign announced	no	*positive*	NA

MAIN SOURCES: *La Nación*, *Revista de Ciencias Sociales*

In Costa Rica, the *PLN* majority was only strong and stable during the first nine months of the 1994-1998 legislature. Then it slipped into a crisis made of internal divisions, political scandals and embarrassing strategic errors. As shown in Table 3.8, a handful of crucial events redirected the discourse about the majority in a negative sense. The chart in the following page shows the creation and continuation of a negative trend starting in December 1994. Overall, Graph 3.9 shows 1994 was a positive year, as 75 out of 131 majority-related articles (or 57%) saw it as strong or cohesive. The first months of the *Figueres* administration were definitely the easiest, and the *PLN* executive had some initial confidence. Party unity was maintained through compromise, although one could see the seeds of future discord being sown in a sidelined parliamentary party. After some uncertainty in handling the *BAC* public finance scandal, the bank's closure in September marked the highest point for the majority. Then, late in the year some governmental

decisions came under fire and undermined its strength. The honeymoon with the Costa Rican people lasted a mere nine months.

In this early stage some third-party MPs supported the politics of the minority government, most notoriously Juan Guillermo Brenes Castillo, known as *Cachimbal*, historical leader of the agrarian party *Partido Unión Agrícola Cartaginés* (P*UAC*).[70] His vote was instrumental to elect the Parliamentary committees leaders at the beginning of May. In exchange for *PUAC*'s support, the executive committed to investing in the agricultural development of the Cartago canton. Internally, Figueres oscillated between hardline and compromise. The executive tended to make the agenda, and agreements were sought only when the parliamentary party complained. Already in June 1994, party secretary Walter Coto Molina, wrote the President to assure that MPs were being heard. They then agreed to hold a meeting between the *PLN* parliamentary group and the President every fifteen days.[71]



The new majority had no time to settle peacefully into national leadership, as a massive scandal around the mismanagement of the *Banco Anglo Costarricense* (*BAC*) erupted unexpectedly in June 1994. As *BAC* was one of the country's largest public banks, this was the most dramatic event of the whole period, and it is treated at length in the other empirical chapters, especially due to its impact upon institutional credibility (ch.6). At first,

[70] Martín, Rodolfo & Matute, Roland. "Cachimbal afianza a Liberación" *La Nación* 29 Apr. 1994
[71] Mendez, William. "Ejecutivo cede ante pedidos de diputados" *La Nación* 24 Jun. 1994

the government seemed unsure about how to act, but had the merit to let the investigation run its course. Yet, once the scandal's proportions and its economic repercussions were revealed in September, the President acted swiftly and shut down the bank, to avoid further financial and political fallout. Despite the opposition's criticism, the press appreciated how the new majority was tracing a line in the sand against corruption and approved *Liberación*'s decision to close *BAC*.[72] The public had a similarly positive opinion, according to a series of polls.[73]

Late in the year, internal turmoil resumed in *PLN*, with the resignation of Economic Affairs Minister Calixto Chaves Zamora and with the fight between the *Corte Suprema* and Security Minister Elías Soley. At the time, Chaves owned the meat-processing company *PIPASA* and *Aero Costa Rica* (which would file for bankruptcy in 1997). His companies had received *BAC* loans, making him the most exposed cabinet member. He presented his resignation on August 12, but Figueres, who had picked him personally, accepted it only in early September.[74] As for Soley, in November he criticized the *Sala IV* for not admitting the government's suspension of four top *BAC* managers. The Constitutional judges rejected accusations of politicization and held in contempt an executive too eager to solve the scandal.[75]

The second year was crucial for the *Figueres* administration. Unable to handle the economic crisis, the government made complex internal and external agreements. The public started feeling that the campaign promises of 1993 were being betrayed. Quantitatively, only 63 out of 198 (31.8%) articles coded for majority-related mechanisms were positive, a complete inversion of 1994's positive tendency. Figueres hoped to stabilize his leadership by signing a bipartisan pact in April 1995, but his hopes were soon dashed. Often having to agree with *PUSC*'s ultimatums further exacerbated internal party divisions.

Once again in mid-January 1995 Walter Coto expressed his skepticism towards the executive's conduct. As party secretary, his public remarks raised concerns, especially when they exposed the ruthless public sector cuts that the government executed.[76] The government claimed that Coto's words did not express the official party line,[77] but *PLN* was clearly split between supporters of Figueres and an internal opposition. One year after the election, a series of opinion polls judged the *Liberacionistas* in an extremely negative

[72] "La muerte del Banco Anglo" *La Nación* 15 Sep. 1994
[73] Mayorga, Armando. "Mayoría respalda cierre" *La Nación* 18 Sep. 1994
[74] Vizcaíno, Irene & Mendez, William. "Calixto Chavez deja el gobierno" *La Nación* 8 Oct. 1994
[75] Mendez Garita, William."Presidente de Corte emplaza a Soley" *La Nación* 3 Dec. 1994
[76] Mendez Garita, William. "Coto pide cambios a Figueres" *La Nación* 13 Jan. 1995
[77] Herrera, Mauricio. "Cúpula del PLN desautoriza a Coto" *La Nación* 17 Jan. 1995

fashion.[78] Then in March a small cabinet reshuffle promised to redefine the executive's trajectory.[79] Carlos Manuel Castillo left the *Central Bank* presidency, while Elías Soley and Carlos Espinach had to give up their ministerial posts. Figueres concentrated powers by nominating two vice-presidents, who had not initially been in the cabinet: Rebeca Grynspan and Rodrigo Oreamuno, who was tasked with linking the Congress and the party. Still, the excluded ministers held a grudge.

The key event which came to unexpectedly damage the majority came in late April. After weeks of negotiations, the government and the main opposition party *PUSC* signed a pact,[80] or as some said, a *deal with the devil*. This showed that the President was perhaps closer to the opposition than to an increasingly anxious *PLN*. On May 1, addressing the Congress, Figueres publicly apologized for his inability to steer in the right direction a country that he defined ungovernable.[81] This unprecedented declaration of incapacity was unanimously seen as a signal of weakness. In late May the President even survived a plane accident,[82] which saw him hospitalized for a few days and had a negative symbolic impact.

Periodically, two popular *PLN* ex-presidents, Oscar Arias and Carlos Alberto Monge, criticized the administration. Ironically, the executive was also trying to use their charisma during internal consultations and at public events to show unity.[83] The slow, complicated process for electing the new *PLN* president Rolando Araya Monge,[84] showed how constant compromise and excessive public scrutiny underlined all internal decisions. The party's internal qualms were cast as the attempt of its younger wing to adopt a pro-business "third way" approach, being met coldly by an old guard that still believed in nationalization. Parallels with Tony Blair's party are appropriate, except British *Labour* could count on a solid economy, weak opponents, and communications under control.

Bad economic projections and a dismal inflation forecast of 19% were blamed directly on the government.[85] Then during the Independence celebrations of September 15 Figueres had a confrontation with a group of high school students, who insulted him repeatedly in front of a large crowd, and his security detail had to intervene.[86] Widely condemned, the episode was still a clear signal of discontent. Then, when Security minister

[78] Herrera, Mauricio. "Cae apoyo a Figueres" *La Nación* 6 Feb. 1995
[79] "Cambios en Gobierno" *La Nación* 8 Mar. 1995
[80] "Sorpresivo acuerdo" *La Nación* 29 Apr. 1995
[81] Álvarez Ulate, Ricardo. "País se hace ingobernable" *La Nación* 2 May 1995
[82] "Figueres a salvo" *La Nación* 26 May 1995
[83] Mendez Garita, William. "Arias y Monges serán integrados a cúpula" *La Nación* 27 Jun. 1995
[84] "Confirmado ayer Araya" 9 Jul. 1995
[85] Barquero S., Marvin "Gobierno proyecta inflacción de 19%" *La Nación* 6 Sep. 1995
[86] "Estudiantes encararon a Figueres" *La Nación* 16 Sep. 1995

Juan Diego Castro gave a Congressional speech which blamed Costa Rica's paralysis on its MPs, havoc broke. His declarations enraged his party base and the public, as reflected by the results of a poll.[87] In fact, inside *PLN* and *PUSC* condemnation was near-unanimous, so that a motion of censorship was created and voted, with 51 out of 55 votes in favor, at a speed altogether unusual for local politics. Juan Diego Castro had to face the music and resign. [88]

Then 1996 was dramatic for the Figueres administration, to the point that at the end of the year, the party's survival was called into question. Even knowing now that *PLN* won the Presidency in 2006 and 2010, in 1996 internal quarrels turned into chaos through a series of complicated internal elections and decisions, which compounded the executive's weakness. Only 31%, or 49/157 articles coded for the majority depicted it positively, a slight fall on the 1995 levels. Starting in January 1996, the role of José Manuel Corrales, presidential pre-candidate for 1998, grew within *Liberación*. His reputation as an anti-corruption lawyer made him a credible contender, and he spoke as a *de facto* leader, although the party investiture was not due until mid-1997. *La Nación*'s director Eduardo Ulibarri, defined *Corrales*' strategy as: "*convert[ing] himself into a candidate in opposition to the government party, to confront someone who he considered a government candidate disguised as opposition*". [89] [90] In other words, despite his long militancy in *PLN,* Corrales spoke as an anti-establishment candidate, opposing the pact with *PUSC*. The outcome of such a strategy was disastrous for the party, and his behavior fed internal divisions. It also created a strange counterpoint in the media, that always reported his disagreement to the "official" version of the government.

Then the *PLN* base deserted February's internal district elections, which took place in a mood of apathy.[91] Given that the majority of delegates elected did not belong to Corrales' current, other personalities within the party made themselves heard, including Walter Coto – who had just left the party secretariat[92] – and Carlos Manuel Castillo.[93] The only good news were in the early electoral polls for 1998, showing a head-to-head between Rodríguez (*PUSC*) and Corrales.[94] In the following months, the image of the Figueres administration

[87] Álvarez Ulate, Arturo "Ticos censuran a Castro" *La Nación* 11 Dec. 1995
[88] Álvarez, Arturo & Matute, Roland "Censurado ministro Castro" *La Nación* 15 Dec. 1995
[89] Ulibarri, Eduardo "La estrategia de Corrales" *La Nación* 14 Jan.1996
[90] Spanish "*Convertirse en un candidato de oposición desde el partido de gobierno para enfrentarse a quien identifica como un candidato de gobierno desfrazado de oposición.*"
[91] "Apatía en elección del PLN" *La Nación* 5 Feb. 1996
[92] Leiton, Patricia "Relevo en secretaría de Liberación" *La Nación* 19 Jan. 1996
[93] Mendez Garita, William "Guerra por distritales del PLN" *La Nación* 13 Feb. 1996
[94] Matute, Roland "Rodríguez y Corrales codo a codo" *La Nación* 10 Feb. 1996

deteriorated, with spring surveys gradually showing how *Liberación* was becoming "*smaller than ever*". Only 26.8% of those polled declared sympathy for *PLN* in May 1996, when a year prior the same poll had given the party 40.8%.[95] This depended upon a growing number of citizens who felt that no party represented them (41.8%), but *PLN* was also trailing *PUSC* by 4.5%.

The majority went on divided over the summer. Party President Rolando Araya said on June 23 that *PLN* could not carry the executive's cross,[96] and lamented that what once was "*a political project, a flag, was now a stairway*" to power.[97] A long analysis argued that a political cancer affected *PLN*, pointing at pre-electoral infighting and lack of leadership.[98] The last straw came in late August, when the party's *Asamblea Plenaria* postponed the direct election of *PLN* candidates to Congress to 2002.[99] The party base had long asked to transition from a nomination-based system to open parliamentary primaries, and the Figueres campaign had committed to it. Edgar Fonseca lucidly depicted the negative impact of the chaos that ensued inside the party: "*never before a government had contributed so much to de-intentify – not to say to be ashamed – [...] of one's own party to hundreds of thousands of partisans*" that elected it in 1994.[100] In October the media started intonating the *de profundis* of a *PLN* in full anarchy: splitting or disappearing seemed the only options. It was proving impossible to reconcile the ideological 1969 Charter that advocated for an interventionist state, with those who embraced neoliberalism, signed the *World Bank*'s *SAP*s, and "pacted" with *PUSC*.[101] Comparisons with the center-right Carazo Presidency (1978-1982), when Costa Rica's debt had defaulted and its party system reconfigured, became commonplace.[102] Ideological disagreements, unclear leadership, scarce internal democracy, waning popular support, economic crisis, weakness in Congress, careerism... the troubles afflicting *PLN* in 1996 seemed endless. This incredible weakness destroyed competition, because any opponent with decent political savvy would have won in 1998.

The opinion of the majority remained negative during 1997 and early 1998, when only 35% or 80 out of 227 articles were positive. Since the trend had not changed, a dissatisfied and disillusioned party base largely deserted the polls in the 1998 election. Yet, in 1997, the choice as presidential candidate had momentarily paused the majority's internal conflict.

[95] Herrero, Mauricio "Liberación está más pequeño que nunca" *La Nación* 17 Jun. 1996
[96] Guevara, José David "No podemos cargar la cruz del ejecutivo" *La Nación* 23 Jun. 1996
[97] Spanish: "un proyecto politico, una bandera; ahora es una escalera."
[98] Guevara, José David "Cancer político afecta al PLN" *La Nación* 23 Jun. 1996
[99] Mendez Garita, William "Delegados vencen a cúpula del PLN" *La Nación* 1 Sep. 1996
[100] Fonseca, Edgar "El PLN secuestrado" *La Nación* 9 Sep. 1996
[101] Herrera, Mauricio & Ronald Matute "PLN en lucha contra su fin" *La Nación* 13 Oct. 1996
[102] Fonseca, Edgar "PLN, cortinas" *La Nación* 19 Oct. 1996

Then, *PUSC*'s mid-year internal crisis represented a lifeboat, but fraud accusations and the final cancellation of Parliamentary primaries rekindled the divisions inside *PLN*. The party's weakness remained a harsh reality, to the point of having to give up on a full-blown campaign, because of lacking donations and little will to organize for a divisive candidate.

1996 had ended surprisingly for *PLN*: a Civil Registry ruling had invalidated the party bylaws amendments which, *inter alia*, had postponed the parliamentary candidates' direct election. The advocates of the 1993 reform, Coto and Corrales among others, welcomed this decision.[103] As usual, this resulted in heated discussions and accusations. In late January, Corrales filed a *recurso de amparo* to invalidate the August 1996 convention, but in April Constitutional Court judge Rodolfo Piza, upheld its validity.[104] Then on May 7, Corrales asked to move the 1996 party convention by a month to July 1 to solve the issue, but his resolution did not pass.[105] Then Carlos Manuel Castillo Morales, who had lost to Calderón in 1990 and had the support of Figueres, retired his pre-candidature on February 8, a testament to the President's internal weakness. This left Coto, now President of the Assembly, and Corrales, who in the only televised debate seemed to agree on basically everything.[106] The party primaries took place jointly to the party convention on June 1. Participation was low, but Corrales obtained a reassuring 73%,[107] and renewed his commitment to parliamentary primaries. In late June, a *CID-Gallup* poll showed a new political balance unthinkable only a few months prior, putting Corrales at 29%, against 25% for Rodríguez.[108] The presidential nomination could have started a last-minute recovery.

Then, to sink the majority for a final time, the unthinkable happened again,. On July 2 it transpired that the *Internal Tribunal for Elections* (*TEI*) had detected anomalies in *PLN*'s primary election and had invalidated 39 voting tables.[109] That same day, Corrales gave his approval to a repeat of the internal election, but the process remained on standby until the facts could be clarified.[110] The new *PLN* secretary, Rolando González Ulloa believed the investigation could increase transparency, but also damage the party. On July 10 the matter was brought to the *Supreme Electoral Tribunal* (*TSE*), but irregularities were only cleared on August 18, when Corrales finally became the official *PLN* candidate.[111] But then *TSE* also

103 Herrera, Mauricio "Avalan eleccíon directa en el PLN" *La Nación* 8 Jan. 1997
104 Guevara M., José David "Nueva polémica en PLN por diputaciones" *La Nación* 30 Apr. 1997
105 Mendez G., William "Fracasa propuesta de Corrales" *La Nación* 9 May 1997
106 Mendez Garita, William "Roces minimos en debate Coto-Corrales" *La Nación* 29 May 1997
107 "Corrales candidato" *La Nación* 2 Jun. 1997
108 Guevara M., José David "Corrales sube; Rodríguez baja" *La Nación* 19 Jun. 1997
109 Matute, Roland Ch. & David Guevara M. "Anomalías sacuden al PLN" *La Nación* 2 Jul .1997
110 "Corrales dispuesto a repetir el proceso" *La Nación* 2 Jul. 1997
111 Matute, Roland & Marvin Barquero "Ahora soy candidato" *La Nación* 19 Aug 1997

validated the indirect election of parliamentary candidates, curbing internal democracy for another four years and dampening enthusiasm in the defeated party grassroots.[112]

In November it was announced that *PLN* had scheduled less than 35 public meetings in the two pre-electoral months, in comparison to *PUSC*'s 67.[113] It was a political white flag: *Liberación* lacked the physical, financial and human resources to compete. A few more rallies were then added, but Corrales already trailed by 11% in a November 12 poll.[114] In December the perpetrators of the primaries' fraud were suspended from the party, in a surreal climate of mistrust.[115] The last campaign month did not help a party which had disintegrated its political capital in only four years, as appeals to internal unity and requests to be judged fairly fell on deaf ears. Finally, split-ticket voting in the 1998 election results reflected the popularity gap between Corrales, who lost but still gathered a respectable 44.6% of preferences, and *PLN*, which stopped at 34.8%. At parliamentary level, it was the worst electoral performance in the history of *PLN*.

3.2.4 – The Labour majority in Britain from 1997 to 2001:

Falling competition in a restrictive electoral revolution

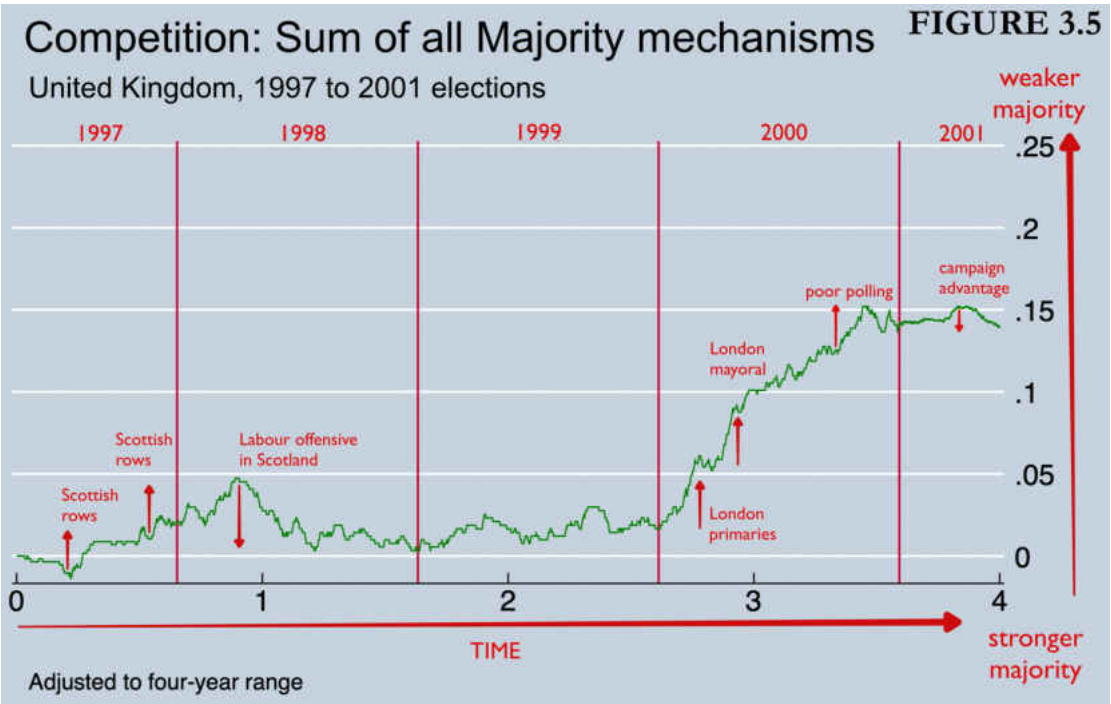
TABLE 3.6 - GREAT BRITAIN, 1997-2001
EVENTS affecting political COMPETITION through the MAJORITY

period	date	focusing event	sample?	sign	intensity
3	*[April 1997]*	Robin Cook scandal	yes	*positive*	17.41%
9	*[March 1998]*	Campbell angers members	yes	*positive*	22.06%
10	*[April 1998]*	Labour's Scotland offensive	yes	*negative*	-19.86%
11	*[April 1998]*	large polls lead	yes	*negative*	-15.44%
13	*[August 1998]*	Scottish Labour divisions	yes	*positive*	13.24%
18	*[February 1999]*	Welsh leadership contest	yes	*positive*	11.08%
27	*[January 2000]*	London mayoral campaign	yes	*positive*	13.36%
28	*[February 2000]*	Alun Michael resigns in Wales	yes	*positive*	24.49%
29	*[March 2000]*	Livingstone tops London polls	yes	*positive*	24.49%
30	*[March 2000]*	Section 18 criticism	yes	*positive*	22.26%
33	*[May 2000]*	Livingstone elected London mayor	yes	*positive*	11.13%
34	*[June 2000]*	bad polling	yes	*positive*	15.58%
40	*[May 2001]*	landslide predictions	yes	*negative*	-11.17%

MAIN SOURCES: *Daily Mail, King (2001), Geddes and Tonge (2001), Butler and Kavanagh (2001)*

112 Guevara M., José David "Registro valida decisión del PLN" *La Nación* 27 Aug 1997
113 Matute, Roland "Advierten error del PLN" *La Nación* 4 Nov 1997
114 Matute, Roland "Rodríguez 35,3%; Corrales 24,5%" *La Nación* 12 Nov. 1997
115 Mora, Emilia & Jorge Solorzano "PLN suspende a 15 por fraude" *La Nación* 4 Dec. 1997

During the 1997-2001 legislature the British party system was in transition, both systemically and internally to the main parties. The 1997 election had completely overturned the existing political equilibria, and had represented "the most innovative political context since 1959" (Butler and Kavanagh, 1997). During the campaign, the return of a *Labour* government after 18 years was expected, but the real shock lied in their final 12.5% lead on the *Tories*. The new majority's command of 465 seats in the House of Commons was a record for the party, and signaled the strategic success of targeting marginal seats. A sharper fall of turnout in seats that were safe for *Labour* also confirms this analysis. Yet, the team that came into government was young and had no government experience. Some of its members had not been long-time *Labour* activists and Tony Blair had personally chosen the chief whip – a decision that was normally left to the parliamentary faction. As he was responsible for keeping discipline in the *Commons*, this was done to ensure centralized control over his MPs.



As Figure 3.5 shows, in the British case the majority's strength and cohesion was relatively stable until the end of 1998, since the negative trend of late 1997 and early 1998 was neutralized by later good coverage. On the other hand, 1999 was a very negative year, with internal quarrels and scandals undermining the government's position. Then in the months before the 2001 election, the situation stabilized and Tony Blair could secure another term in office. It is very important to remark that this graph *per se* does not indicate a situation that would lead to a negative electoral revolution. As the arrow to the right

indicates, ceteris paribus, weakening the government coalition, i.e. the majority, increases competition. What makes this graph significant is its combination with three other factors: a dramatic deterioration of the credibility of national institutions, the weakness of the opposition (especially of the *Conservative* party) and the large margin that *Labour* had obtained in the 1997 landslide.

The period immediately after the election was positive for the new government. After all, the electorate had chosen change, and *New Labour*'s ideological move had won over centrist voters. During the previous three years, they had been remarkably capable in their response to anything that was happening, successfully criticizing the Major government. The first setback that forced the party to "*come to terms with events*"[116] from a position of power was the scandal around the accusations of adultery against Secretary of State Robin Cook in August 1997. The majority came under fire when it was made known that it had attempted to divert public attention by talking instead about the investigations on Patten[117] by the MI6.[118] The clumsiness with which this scandal was handled, and the attempts to cover up even the smallest mistakes would become the party's Achilles' heel.[119] The humanity with which Blair handled the national grief around the death of Diana Spencer at the end of August rescued the government's image.

In February 1998 signals of early internal divisions weakened the party. First, it became clear that *Scottish Labour*'s was having a problematic adaptation to the party's transformation than the central office in London. After a contentious local party congress where the new leadership's "control freakery" was exposed,[120] Scottish *Labour* leader Donald Dewar had a hard time rallying the local activists of the internal left.[121] In particular, an internal row erupted around his decision to veto the granting of knighthood to actor Sean Connery, a well-known supporter of Scottish nationalism.[122] Things were only made worse when it became known that Alastair Campbell, Blair's press secretary, had intimated a government Secretary and her Minister to immediately cease any animosity regarding how to present the new welfare reform.[123] Given that Campbell was an unelected official,

116 "Labour Comes to Terms with 'Events'" 4 Aug. 1997
117 Hong Kong's governor
118 "Labour's Patten 'Smears'; Mandelson 'Was the Manipulator'" *Daily Mail* 5 Aug. 1997
119 Neil, Andrew "Scandal the Spin Doctors Cannot Cover Up" *Daily Mail* 6 Aug. 1997
120 Deerin, Chris "Labour's Inner Strife Bursts out in the Open; Treasurer Hits out at Spin Doctor Interference" 24 Mar. 1998
121 Deerin, Chris "Still Brothers, but on Separate Sides of the Labour Great Divide; Labour at Perth / Dewar Hits Back at Left but Offers Olive Branch" 9 Mar. 1998
122 Deerin, Chris SEAN'S DIG AT DEWAR; HE MUST BE 'EMBARRASSED' SAYS CONNERY ON LABOUR VETO. *Daily Mail* 24 Feb. 1998
123 Eastham, Paul "Shut Up, the Voice of Blair Tells Ministers; WHITEHALL ALARM OVER ALASTAIR CAMPBELL'S FURIOUS FAXES" *Daily Mail* 30 Mar. 1998

he was forced to explain himself in Parliament.[124] Also, since the two elected officials involved, Harriet Harman and Frank Field, had respectively been nominated by Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, the rift reflected their different positions, showing a more internally divided party than one could have thought.

The following months then showed the organizational strength of the *Labour* party machine. The party had led the policy agenda that enabled the first elections to a Scottish parliament, it was now faced with the possibility of losing it a year later. To avoid this outcome, they unleashed a series of attacks against the *SNP*, and presented themselves as the party of business, with the support of local entrepreneurs.[125] Soon after, a poll gave Labour a 14-point lead on the nationalists, a year before the election.[126] Not leaving any room for error, in early May Blair then created a task force to define *Labour*'s strategy in Scotland, which included Chancellor Gordon Brown.[127] These events represented the only successful show of strength of the majority before the final phase of the 2001 electoral campaign.

Some of new majority's strength derived from its flexibility, visible when Armed Forces Minister John Reid accused the *SNP* to be using the Scottish parliament as "a battering ram to smash the United Kingdom". It was an interesting spectacle to see *Labour* taking on the role of patriotic savior of the union, and Blair himself promised to visit Scotland often in the following year.[128] Even beyond the Scottish preparations, the leadership acted through Alastair Campbell, always attentive to keep its troops on message and constantly putting pressure on the press.[129] If this worked for the party leadership in London, this was not the case for a less enthusiastic Scottish membership. The appointment of media tycoon Gus Macdonald as Scottish Minister for business and industry, with Gordon Brown's blessing, brought internal divisions to the fore in August.[130] It was also an instance of how the party leadership was trying to keep in check a local party that was ideological to its left, and closer to the values of "old" *Labour*. Donald Dewar himself knew that successfully governing Scotland was conditional upon a continuation

[124] Campbell Called to Account *Daily Mail* 31 Mar. 1998
[125] Deerin, Chris "LABOUR BID TO GET BUSINESS ON BOARD; CHANCELLOR COURTS INDUSTRY AS SNP ATTACKS BIAS IN ECONOMIC POLICY." *Daily Mail* 10 Apr. 1998
[126] MacDonnell, Hamish "The Popularity Poll; SNP Leader Comes out on Top as the Voters Give Blair Another Huge Boost" *Daily Mail* 29 Apr. 1998
[127] Clark, William "Blair Calls in the 'Heavyweights' to Bolster Dewar" 5 May 1998
[128] MacDonnell, Hamish "Blair to the Rescue in Parliament Campaign; PRIME MINISTER STEPS IN TO REVIVE LABOUR'S FLAGGING FORTUNES" *Daily Mail* 9 May 1998
[129] "The Columnist Working to a Political Agenda" *Daily Mail* 7 Jul. 1998
[130] Heffer, Simon "How Blair Fell into a Tartan Trap; BEHIND THE ROW OVER THE NEWSCOTTISH MINISTER ". *Daily Mail* 5 Aug. 1998

of a social justice, community-oriented approach.[131] In the remainder of the year, stability was then the outcome of party discipline and lack of major events that could sway the discourse in a negative direction.

During 1999 the strength and cohesion of the majority were stable, since small positive and negative fluctuations tended to compensate each other. In early 1999, the contest for the *Welsh Labour* leadership became an embarrassment for the party. The local candidate was Rhodri Morgan, who had been a champion of devolution, had leftist proclivities, and was not part of the *New Labour* clique. Instead Blair had appointed Alun Michael, who was the Secretary for Wales but enjoyed limited popularity in the region.[132] This kind of tensions would damage the party in the long run, especially when they extended to London. Then, the positive impact of victories in the Scottish and Welsh elections was mitigated by the necessity of a coalition with the *Liberal Democrats* to control both regional governments. This was due to the strong proportional element present in the mixed electoral systems adopted for these new parliamentary institutions, and it generated troubles within the party. The rest of the year was then relatively uneventful for the majority's strength and cohesion.

The data shows that 2000 was the most negative year for the majority. Its political strength started deteriorating early on because of the internal fight for the London mayoral election. Due for May 4, it was the first ever direct election of a chief official in historically parliamentarian Britain. Just like in Wales, there was an official party candidate, Frank Dobson, this time facing a primaries' challenge from the internal left, personified by Ken Livingstone. "*Red Ken*" was a vocal critic of the Blair administration,[133] who received the endorsement of the largest trade unions and was popular with Londoners after having been the capital's Council leader in the 1980s.[134] Blair repeatedly attacked Livingstone, even claiming his plan to raise money for London tube updates undermined the government's fiscal agenda.[135] It did not help party cohesion that polls from the same period showed that the government's popularity had fallen under 50% for the first time, due to lack of expected interventions in the National Health System.[136]

[131] Hughes, David "Dewar's Independence Scottish Secretary Backs Old Labour Values for Holyrood" *Daily Mail* 11 Sep. 1998
[132] Heathcoat-Amory, Edward "A Stench of Something Rotten in the Valleys; TONY BLAIR'S ABUSE OF DEMOCRACY IN WALES HAS DISTURBING IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REST OF BRITAIN" *Daily Mail* 19 Feb. 1999
[133] "NO BLOCK ON CRITIC OF BLAIR'S SELECTION." *Daily Mail* 15 Jan. 2000
[134] Hinsliff, Gaby "Dobson Is Humiliated as Union Backs Ken for Mayor" *Daily Mail* 7 Jan. 2000
[135] Hinsliff, Gaby "Ken and the key question." *Daily Mail* 27 Jan. 2000
[136] Reynolds, Mark "Labour's Popularity Slumps to New low" *Daily Mail* 27 Jan. 2000

Then suddenly, on February 9, facing a no-confidence vote, Welsh secretary Alun Michael resigned.[137] This saw the local party leadership pass onto the shoulders of party activists' favorite Rhodri Morgan, and the central party was embarrassed once again. Internal divisions extended to London where even Frank Dobson disapproved how the leadership was handling the campaign. This had included the decision of holding an electoral-college-style vote with three internal constituencies.[138] On February 20, Livingstone lost the primary election by a hair, with 48.5% to Dobson's 51.5%, and only after third candidate Glenda Jackson dropped out. Tellingly, Livingstone won an ample majority among local party members (60%) and trade union representatives (72%), but was defeated because elected members followed the party line and gave him a mere 13.5%. Shortly after, Blair's popularity reached its lowest ever level at +7%, and the public's trust in *Labour*'s government appeared to have eroded significantly.[139] [140] This is when the first rumors that Livingstone was considering an independent run for the London mayoralty began to spread.[141] Dobson publicly challenged his rival during a *BBC* program, not realizing his extremely weak position. A poll published on March 7 gave 67% of preferences to Livingstone.[142] Even his involvement in a minor scandal, related to a failure to register earnings linked to media work, did not sway an electorate that in the projections of the end of the month was giving him a baffling 45% advantage over Dobson.[143]

The majority's policy agenda became a liability in April, when conservative voices attacked *Labour* for its planned repeal of *Section 28* of the *Local Government Act* (1988), which prohibited the promotion of homosexuality in schools. The newly elected Scottish government was planning on going ahead with its cancellation, and a television advertising featuring Dewar and Education Minister Sam Gailbraith was fiercely criticized.[144] In June the measure actually passed in Scotland, while the rest of the UK would have to wait until 2003. May 2000 was another critical month, as the majority came out weakened by local elections. Livingstone comfortably won the London election with 39% in the first round and 58% in the second. He personally gave a stark warning to the government not to ignore the London result, as the internal opposition might have been more dangerous than

[137] Hinsliff, Gaby "Humiliation as Blair's Welsh 'Poodle' Resigns" Daily Mail 10 Feb. 2000
[138] "Dobson blasts Labour's 'stupidity' over mayor." *Daily Mail* 28 Jan. 2000
[139] "Blair's popularity falls to its lowest ever." *Daily Mail* 24 Feb. 2000
[140] Hinsliff, Gaby "Red Ken Row Has Eroded Our Trust in Blair Say Voters" *Daily Mail* 10 Mar. 2000
[141] Eastham, Paul "Red Ken Hints He's Ready to Run" *Daily Mail* 24 Feb. 2000
[142] Hughes, David "Red Ken Kicks off with 55% Lead over Dobson" *Daily Mail* 7 Mar. 2000
[143] Eastham, Paul "Livingstone's 45-Point Lead over Dobson" *Daily Mail* 17 Mar. 2000
[144] Smith, Ian "Keep the Clause advert banned." *Daily Mail* 11 Mar. 2000

the other parties.[145] Frank Dobson only gathered a ghastly 13%. Tony Blair was certainly unhappy when it came out that *Labour*'s national opinion polls lead on the *Tories* had halved to 7% in mid-May.[146] To compound these news, it became known that the party had lost some 60,000 members since the 1997 election, two-thirds of whom had joined in 1994 or later.[147] This was reflected outside of England too, as the dissatisfaction towards Scottish *Labour* negatively affected their electoral projections.[148]

Reliance on the computer sample misses the last salient event of 2000. This is where the secondary sources are pulled in as a complement. The sudden spark of "fuel protests" in September 2000 was unprecedented in nature and scale, and affected the majority's popularity sharply, although they were not targeted at the government, and as such they would not have been coded as majority-related. Yet, they sent *Labour*'s opinion polling in the 32-37% range, the lowest for the 1997-2001 period, and momentarily behind the *Tories*. The protests' short duration was due to their association with two social categories, farmers and haulers, which had deep seated resentments against the institutions, but were not specifically linked to interest groups and the main parties (Robinson, 2002). While paralyzing the country, and scaring an unprepared executive, they waned too fast to affect the election's run-up.

In late 2000, discontent inside the party had spread, even if polling recovered after the September hiccup. Governing, and implementing specific agendas, had proven to be much harder than most had expected inside the party, and inexperience came with a price. Donald Dewar explicitly admitted to the difficulty of the Scottish office, at the end of a summer marked by a series of public sector strikes and where his administration struggled to handle the transition to electronic school exams.[149] Sadly, the stress of the job got the best of him and he passed away on October 11, due to a brain hemorrhage. His death had a unifying effect inside the party, and his succession was not contentious. Henry McLeish became the new First Minister of Scotland with joint support from constituencies and trade unions.[150]

The campaign months did not alter the strength and cohesion of the majority, which knew how to prepare for an election. As King (2001) commented in the aftermath,

[145] Hughes, David "TRIUMPH OF THE TROUBLEMAKER; Livingstone Twists the Knife with a Warning for Labour" *Daily Mail* 6 May 2000
[146] Hughes, David "Blair Gloom as Poll Lead Is Halved to 7%" *Daily Mail* 16 May 2000
[147] Wilson, Graeme "60,000 Have Deserted New Labour" *Daily Mail* May 31 2000
[148] MacDonnell, Hamish "Section 28 Poll Misery for Labour" *Daily Mail* 20 Jun. 2000
[149] MacDonnell, Hamish "How Dewar Struggled with Burden of Power" *Daily Mail* 26 Sep. 2000
[150] MacDonnell, Hamish "Who Will Succeed? McLeish Is Favourite for the Top Post" *Daily Mail* 12 Oct. 2000

Labour had succeeded in creating a good reputation in management, and Gordon Brown was seen as a competent and respected Chancellor. Even if half of Britons agreed that Blair was "all spin and no delivery", Brown did not let the good economic record of his administration go unnoticed (Butler and Kavanagh, 2002). Two events could have potentially damaged *Labour* during this final phase, but neither made any difference in the end. The first was the start of a foot-and-mouth disease outbreak in cow and sheep farms in February. After an insecure initial response, the government postponed the national election – initially programmed for May – to June, and was praised for having put the country first (Butler and Kavanagh, 2001, p.82). The second, a couple of weeks before the election, was the televised footage of Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott punching a man who had thrown an egg against him, in Rhyl, Wales. Instead of sparking outrage, a large chunk of the general public felt relief in seeing a spontaneous reaction from a politician belonging to a control-obsessed party (Geddes and Tonge, 2002). Ultimately, in spite of all its weaknesses and internal divisions, the 2001 election was another landslide for the *Labour* party, which only lost five of its 418 parliamentary seats after four years. At the same time the party dropped 2.8 million votes across the country, as voter turnout reached its lowest ever level, at 59.4% of registered voters.

3.3 – Rethinking the Majority's Role In Political Competition

The dense historical accounts presented in this chapter refer to political contexts that were very different under a temporal and geographic perspective. Yet, for all four cases, the majority clearly appeared weakened during the period under scrutiny. Given the wildly different outcomes in terms of political participation, with positive and negative electoral revolutions presented side by side, common factors take center stage. As seen in the previous chapter, rapid changes in voter turnout happen when the political context alters sufficiently the habit of voters or non-voters, prompting them to adopt a different behavior. Majority strength might actually have a stabilizing effect on electoral participation, and to make electoral revolutions less likely.

On the surface, the *restrictive* cases are more puzzling. There, contrary to what the initial hypothesis had predicted, the weakening of the parties of government was massive in absolute terms. New majorities elected with strong mandates and the trust of the

electorate, let voters down and appeared unfit for making the interests of the public. It is no accident that during the same period both the *Partido Liberación Nacional* and *New Labour* were going through intense internal transformations. Neither party was able to handle their transitions smoothly, and although one party won another term in office and the other did not, that did not depend on the strength or cohesiveness the Blair's government. In particular, contradictory behavior inside a majority party seemed to have a weight in creating disaffection within the electorate. Strong majorities are clearly not necessary for falling voter turnout, and while margins of victory might be a good predictor of voter turnout at precinct level, this is not true on a national scale.

The *expansive* cases, on the other hand, constitute less of a puzzle. Here the initial theorization of the mechanisms had hypothesized that the majority would need weakening before being credibly challenged by a strong opposition. That was certainly the case in both France and Honduras, where the parties making up the government coalition were criticized for their inability to address the real issues in the country, and could have lost the following election, even if that did not happen in either of these cases. The overall impression is that the weakening should not be excessively powerful, because voters affiliated to the majority parties still have to turn out, in order to have an *expansive* electoral revolution. In fact, some of these supporters will turn out because the context has become more competitive and their political preferences are at risk if the majority loses to the opposition.

It is always necessary to remember that the separation of different factors in this study is done for analytical reasons, and that in reality these elements appear simultaneously. In sum, even if the effect of the majority's transformation on competition and participation did not take an opposite sign in the positive and negative cases, this chapter offers important lessons. It informs the discussion of the rest of the theory, by positing that strong, more united majorities tend to preserve voting habits, and make the appearance of shocks to electoral participation less likely. In addition, and given some possible degrees of overlap, it is particularly important to compare the results from this chapter with those from chapter 6, dealing with credibility. Ultimately, it might very well be the case that a weaker majority coupled with much more credible institutions brings people out to the polls, whereas a weaker majority combined with a loss of credibility is damning for participation.

CHAPTER IV

COMPETITION : THE OPPOSITION

In Chapter 2, two of the three components of political competition that were consistent across all four electoral revolutions were the opposition's strength and cohesion. In the positive cases, the opposition gained strength and unity, leading to increased electoral participation after a term, while in the negative ones, the opposition's failure to stay cohesive and to attract the public led to falling turnout. Even if both components mattered across the board to redefine the political context, each of the four cases differs in its timing and in the relative importance of strength *versus* cohesion. Relying upon events is especially useful in this sense, because some occurrences clearly impacted one component more than the other.

This chapter presents the political opposition's evolution between two elections from an innovative point of view. Its strength is not just measured through opinion polls and electoral results, but by following the political discourse concerning them. This means recognizing that a party's electoral strength is only one among many important elements. For example, the vote share received by opposition parties can grow between two elections, but if the majority has no chance of losing either election, this is not a significant competitive change. The opposition might have become more fragmented, or perhaps the electorate does not trust anyone within the current party system. Another disadvantage of polls and electoral results is that their assessment is always comparative, relative to other parties or candidates. This represents a drawback for measuring the opposition's impact on voter turnout, because a weak opposition party could fare better than another party that is even weaker. the contrary is just as plausible.

Going into the two positive electoral revolutions, the French opposition went through a fundamental reconfiguration between 1962 and 1967. There, increased cohesion was the leading component, as the opposition's fragmentation had been key to their subordinate role in the previous legislature. A presidential reform forced all parties of the center and the left to make important strategic decisions that would result in their radical transformation in the space of only five years. The emergence of a strong opposition candidate for the 1965 Presidential election was important for creating cohesion early on, even if Gaston Defferre ended up retiring his presidential bid and François Mitterrand took over. The creation of federations and alliances in both the center and the left led to

an incredibly competitive 1967 election, which could have resulted in a change in the majority.

On the other hand, in Honduras the central factor was the opposition's newfound strength. This transformation led the country from a landslide election in 2009 to an extremely competitive 2013 contest. Here turnout grew following the creation of new opposition parties, extending representation to non-traditional cleavages and alignments. The emergence of *LibRe* as a mass party of the left and of an anti-corruption party *PAC* overcompensated the void left by the *Liberal* party's decline. The creation of these formations and their good numbers in pre-electoral polls led to extreme uncertainty in 2013 which mobilized the electorate. Even inside the *Liberal* party the situation improved, with renewed party unity limiting the substantial loss of membership and support that had followed the 2009 election.

As for the negative cases, the Costa Rican opposition grew weaker and discredited after 1994, and won the 1998 election only because the majority was even weaker. As the main opposition, *PUSC* should have capitalized upon the government's crisis, but disappointed voters by allying itself with the current administration and wasting energies in internal leadership fights. The pact dynamics between the majority and the opposition, lasting over three years, were also significant in weakening any impact on competition. Also remarkable was the lack of viable third party alternatives, because it contributed to a stagnant political environment that left the electorate dissatisfied, as recorded by targeted opinion polls. In this sense, the Parliamentary troubles of *Fuerza Democratica* after a good 1994 performance was emblematic of its incapacity to adequately represent the electorate.

Last, the British opposition entered a state of deep crisis after the 1997 election brought alternation in government. A complete loss of cohesion made it unable to seriously challenge the *Labour* party in 2001. In particular, the *Conservative* party spent these four years wrapped in a series of internal fights, with the issue of relations with Europe being especially damning for the party. Their victory in the European Parliament elections was more than offset by their abysmal performance in the local elections. The *Liberal Democrats* were the main alternative, but they actually worked with the majority – especially in the new Scottish and Welsh legislatures – more than challenge it. As for the other parties, they did not have, or acquire, sufficient resources and presence on the territory to improve their situation, and could not offset the damages to the opposition created by the *Tories*' internal crisis.

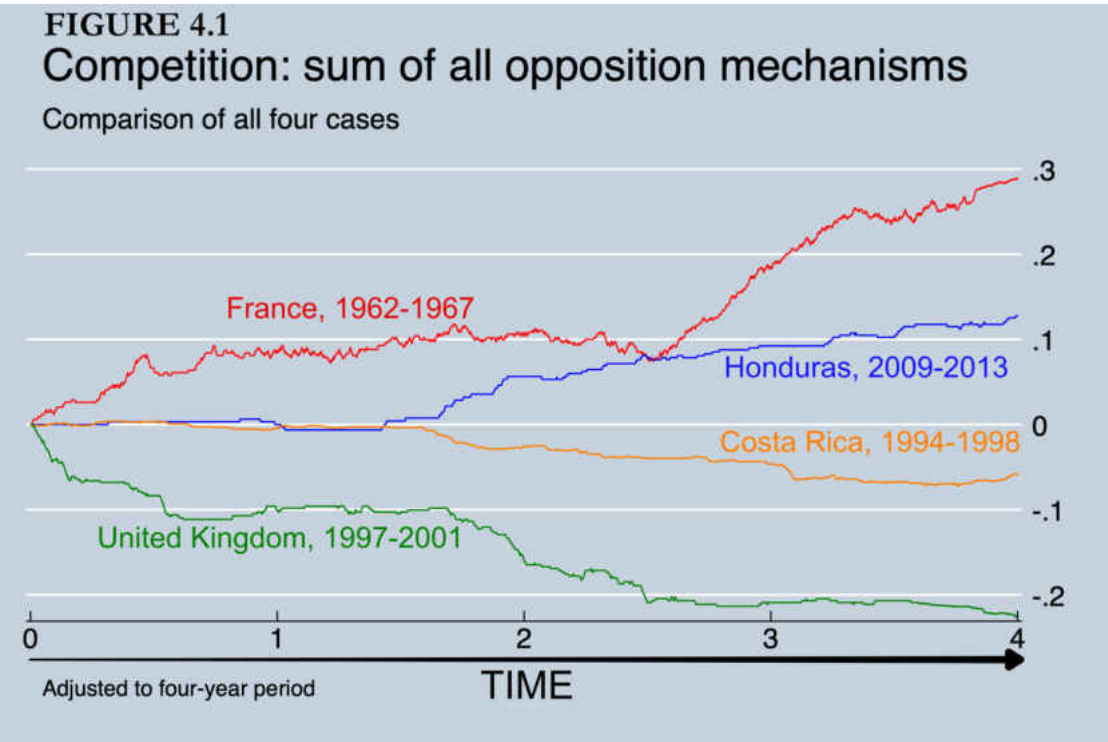


Figure 4.1 represents the different timing of changing competition related to events that were linked to the opposition parties. In Honduras and Costa Rica the first year and half was stable, before the situation evolved in separate, opposite ways. In France and Britain, the initial election (*election A*) had immediate positive/negative effects for the opposition entering a more stable period. In the French case it made opposition parties aware of the necessity of alliances, while in Britain the defeat precipitated the *Conservative* party's internal crisis. Then, in the second half of the Parliamentary term, these initial effects were reinforced by other transformative events affecting the opposition. It is also significant that unlike the mechanisms covered in chapters 3 and 5, the components linked to the opposition did not show contradictory effects. The buildup, fast or slow, followed relatively consistent trends over time.

Then the following table uses quantitative indicators to frame the same periods, and unlike the previous graph it shows discourse intensity, not just changes in the effects' sign. The biggest difference across cases is the opposition's incredible prominence in the French political discourse between 1962 and 1967. Their reconfiguration received extensive coverage, occupying 50% of the sample in the second year. In comparison, the other cases saw less coverage, but discourse was more skewed positively or negatively, reaching an incredible 78% positive in Honduras, which meant that even if the opposition's coverage was small at less than 6% of all sample articles, its negative component was negligible (one article in five). Similarly, in Britain, in spite of using a media source with

clear right-wing sympathies, the discourse on the opposition remained incredibly negative throughout the whole period, while the intensity of the coverage diminished, which signaled of the lack of importance of the *Conservative* party.

TABLE 4.1 - COMPETITION of POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS : OPPOSITION MECHANISMS EFFECT, SIGN and INTENSITY in MEDIA SAMPLES

		France (1962-1967)	Honduras (2009-2013)	Costa Rica (1994-1998)	Great Britain (1997-2001)
YEAR 1	*articles in sample* [a]	345	312	1478	532
	coded opposition [b]	106	4	67	101
	% (discourse intensity) [c]	**30.72%**	**1.28%**	**4.53%**	**18.98%**
	coded +/– opposition [d]	68 | 38	2 | 2	30 | 37	20 | 81
	% positive (disc skewness) [e]	**64.15%**	**50.00%**	**44.78%**	**19.80%**
	difference +/– [f]	+30	0	-7	-61
	% (discourse effect) [g]	**8.70%**	**0.00%**	**-0.47%**	**-11.47%**
YEAR 2	*articles in sample* [a]	437	289	1179	452
	coded opposition [b]	201	20	63	60
	% (discourse intensity) [c]	**46.00%**	**6.92%**	**5.34%**	**13.27%**
	coded +/– opposition [d]	104 | 97	18 | 2	19 | 44	17 | 43
	% positive (disc skewness) [e]	**51.74%**	**90.00%**	**30.16%**	**28.33%**
	difference +/– [f]	+7	+16	-25	-26
	% (discourse effect) [g]	**1.60%**	**5.54%**	**-2.12%**	**-5.75%**
YEAR 3	*articles in sample* [a]	472	420	1020	451
	coded opposition [b]	210	28	46	65
	% (discourse intensity) [c]	**44.49%**	**6.67%**	**4.51%**	**14.41%**
	coded +/– opposition [d]	124 | 86	22 | 6	12 | 34	21 | 44
	% positive (disc skewness) [e]	**59.05%**	**78.57%**	**26.09%**	**32.31%**
	difference +/– [f]	+38	+16	-22	-23
	% (discourse effect) [g]	**8.05%**	**3.81%**	**-2.16%**	**-5.10%**
YEAR 4	*articles in sample* [a]	798	400	1083	1216
	coded opposition [b]	264	30	111	74
	% (discourse intensity) [c]	**33.08%**	**7.50%**	**10.25%**	**6.09%**
	coded +/– opposition [d]	172 | 94	22 | 8	49 | 62	18 | 56
	% positive (disc skewness) [e]	**65.15%**	**73.33%**	**44.14%**	**24.32%**
	difference +/– [f]	+76	+14	-13	-38
	% (discourse effect) [g]	**9.52%**	**3.50%**	**-1.20%**	**-3.13%**
TOTAL	*articles in sample* [a]	2052	1421	4760	2651
	coded opposition [b]	781	82	287	300
	% (discourse intensity) [c]	**38.06%**	**5.77%**	**6.03%**	**11.32%**
	coded +/– opposition [d]	466 | 315	64 | 18	111 | 176	76 | 224
	% positive (disc skewness) [e]	**59.67%**	**78.05%**	**38.68%**	**25.33%**
	difference +/– [f]	+151	+46	-67	-148
	% (discourse effect) [g]	**7.36%**	**3.24%**	**-1.41%**	**-5.58%**

LEGEND **a**: total number of articles for each case study; **b**: articles coded for any opposition mechanism; **c**: b/a ratio, indicating how prominent the mechanism is in the sample; **d**: articles with positive and negative coding of b; **e**: percentage of articles coded positively (when over 50%, positive articles are prevalent, and viceversa under 50%) **f**: difference between the numbers in d, **g**: f/a ratio, prominence of the difference between positive and negative. The color red denotes any value that is negative in some sense (including e below 50%).

Before moving to a brief treatment of the state of the opposition at the beginning of the periods covered by case studies, Table 4.2 summarizes of the main events in the sample.

These events, all of which happened in periods that passed the quantitative threshold – at least one in ten articles in that period is coded positively/negatively for strength and cohesion of the opposition – are given special attention in the rest of the chapter. For France, Honduras and Britain hard choices were made among the most significant episodes, those with the strongest ability to change the state of the opposition within national political discourse. Since the opposition is normally multi-partisan, these accounts also tried to include events that regarded different parties, to avoid making oversimplifications. In all of these cases, both the main parties and the minor parties played an important role in determining the final outcome. A lack of heavily negative events for the Costa Rican opposition was more due to the strong attention given to the majority and to national institutions, then a lack of material.

Table 4.2 : Events affecting COMPETITION disc. positively [+], negatively [–] through OPPOSITION

France(1962-1967)	*Honduras(2009-2013)*	*Costa Rica(1994-1998)*	*United Kingdom(1997-2001)*
9/63.Mollet in Moscow [+]	*4/11.Nasralla presidential bid [+]*	*10/95.FuerzaDem. infighting [-]*	*6/97.Tory leadership contest [-]*
4/65.PCF against Defferre [-]	*9/11.Frente becomes party [+]*	*3/97.PUSC campaign disaster[-]*	*10/97.Tory Euro revolt [-]*
9/65.PCF for Mitterrand [+]	*2/13.oppos. alliance talks [+]*		*3.99.Tory welfare revolt [-]*
2/66.C.Democrate creation[+]	*5/13.Nasralla, Castro ahead [+]*		*5/99.Scottish election loss [-]*
9.66. alliance of left [+]	*11/13.many choices for voters [+]*		*10/99.divisive Thatcher speech [-]*

LEGEND: all events are formatted as month/year, event, sign. ** indicates that the event is present in the secondary literature, but not in the sample, or it is present but its impact is gradual over some months or confused by other events.

4.1 – Different cases, different starting points

4.1.1 – The anti-Gaullist opposition in France before November 1962

The 1958-1962 legislature was a period of intense reconfiguration of the French party system. Other than the Gaullist *UNR-UDT*, examined in the previous chapter, the other main parties presented in the introduction to the empirical section were the *CNIP Independents*, and the christian-democrat *MRP* for the center-right, the *Radicals* and the *SFIO Socialists* for the center-left, and the *PCF Communists* to the far left. Historically, the parties of the center had formed alliances to stop ideological extremism from prevailing. When the Algerian crisis erupted in 1954, the French institutions' strong parliamentarism and the contentious deal-making of traditional parties seemed unable to cope with it.

By May 1958, the Algerian crisis worsened, and the parties decided to call General De Gaulle back to lead an emergency cabinet. He rapidly promoted the creation of new, more majoritarian national institutions, which took on the label of *Cinquième Republique*, to differentiate it from the previous regime. A series of referendums passed the reforms between 1958 and 1962, introducing two-round parliamentary elections and direct Presidential consultations. The Algerian war and the constitutional referendums were extremely divisive inside the traditional parties, all of which were deeply transformed by this renewing of French politics, which simplified and clarified the electoral alternatives. In particular, the French left had begun the 1960s deeply divided. The *PCF* Communists had criticized all parties that collaborated with the General, and they were considered unreliable and anti-democratic. Even the *SFIO* Socialists, their natural allies, were seen as pro-capitalist and imperialistic even after leaving the cabinet in 1959. And yet, things would change rapidly. On February 8, 1962, the police violently repressed a protest against *OAS* terrorism, leaving eight people trampled to death at the *Charonne* metro station in Paris. All of them were left-wing activists or party members. The following protest saw the joint participation of the *PCF* and the center-left, for the first time since the start of the Algerian conflict in 1954.

Then in early September 1962, President De Gaulle proclaimed a referendum on direct Presidential election. The opposition organized a vote of no confidence which made the Pompidou government fall. The strongly majoritarian nature of Presidentialism threatened the moderate parties, by forcing them to take sides. *MRP*, *CNIP Independents*, *Radicals* and *SFIO* Socialists, which had governed with De Gaulle in 1958, organized a cartel of the "*non*" and denounced the plebiscite as unconstitutional (Goguel, 1965). The *Communists*, eager to see France split into two opposed camps, campaigned for the reform. De Gaulle seized the occasion to paint the referendum as a clash between old, elitist parties and a President who wanted to give stable institutions to France (Charlot, 1964). The victory of the "*oui*" with 62% of votes, prepared the stage for the legislative election, due in two weeks.

In the 1962 legislative election, the two parties behind the "*oui*" were expected to gain votes. This applied to the *Gaullists*, but the *Communists* remained at their 1958 levels. The parties of the "*non*" stayed united until the first round results became public, showing that their support to the President had costed the *SFIO* almost 1 million votes. Once the simultaneous defeat of the center-right (*MRP*, *Independents*) was known, the *SFIO* secretary Guy Mollet announced that in districts where the runoff was between a *Gaullist* and a

Communist, *Socialist* votes should go to the latter. The decision to break the *cartel du "non"* between the two rounds equated to allowing the *Communists* back into democratic politics. The *SFIO* secretary gambled on the red, and was rewarded with a number of second-round victories to mitigate his party's defeat. Simultaneously, as the *Gaullists* almost reached an absolute majority, most of the centrist parties were sent to the opposition. The center-right parties (*CNIP*, *MRP*) lost many more votes than anticipated, and they found themselves isolated in the new majoritarian political arrangements.

4.1.2 – The *Partido Liberal* and the minor parties in Honduras before December 2009

Anchored to the rivalry between *Liberales* and *Nacionales*, the Honduran party system appeared unchangeable. It took an interruption of democratic order in 2009 to alter the status quo. Of the two parties, the *Liberal* was historically more internally split, and hosted more socially-oriented tendencies. This was evident when Manuel Zelaya, a businessman and lifetime *Liberal* politician with presidential aspirations, found support in the party's young leftist wing for the 2004 primaries. This current was known as the *principiantes* (beginners) led by Patricia Rodas, whose father Modesto had been a leftist *PL* leader during military rule. A former student leader, Rodas' radical politics were barely tolerated by the *PL* leadership. After winning the primaries, the party leaders told Rodas and Zelaya that the current would have to leave the party if they lost the 2005 Presidential election.

Zelaya won with 49.9%, but the party missed an absolute majority with 62/128 Congress seats. Weak in Congress, the new President also faced worsening economic conditions and worker strikes. Isolated, and seeing dwindling public support, Zelaya looked for allies. A 2007 oil shortage made him and Rodas travel to Nicaragua to celebrate the 28th Anniversary of *Sandinismo*, seeking a deal with Hugo Chavez. Honduran political leaders condemned the trip and prophesized an early end to his Presidency (Moreno, 2007 #*3*). Then, in April 2008 a hunger strike was called to protest the corruption in the *Fiscalía General*[151]. A handful of left-wing personalities joined, including important religious figures padre Melo of free *Radio Progreso*, and father Evelio Reyes. The hunger strike lasted 38 days, and while failing at producing policy change, it sowed the seeds of a new opposition. Historically, the Honduran left had been divided (Moreno, 2008 #5) between workers'

[151] *Public Prosecutor's Office*

unions, political fronts, *NGOs* and popular movements. During the Zelaya presidency it was still looking for a big opportunity like the 1954 banana workers' strike – to which Honduras owed its Labor law (*Código del Trabajo*) – or for a messiah to lead a new party.

In July 2008, Honduras joined *PetroCaribe*, then in August Congress approved entrance in *ALBA* (*Bolivarianist Alliance*), where it was enthusiastically received. These events were fundamental for what followed, as the *National* opposition started calling Zelaya a Communist. For the November 2008 *Liberal* primaries, the candidates' institutional roles barred them from running. Vice-President Elvin Santos resigned in favor of Mauricio Villeda, while the law was changed to authorize President of Congress Roberto Micheletti, amidst Congressional protestations (Rodriguez, 2011). Santos unexpectedly won 53% of preferences. A furious Micheletti got 28%, as he thought he would soon be President, and was given the party leadership in March 2009. Meanwhile, as the international crisis dented remittances income, a nationwide poll showed that 72% considered Zelaya's policies ineffective (Moreno, 2009 *#16*).

In 2008, Zelaya sought an *escamotage* to guarantee his legacy and started thinking about Constitutional reform, by adding a *Cuarta Urna* (*Fourth Ballot*) in the 2009 election, to the three for Presidential, Congress and Mayoral elections. The *Cuarta Urna* would be consultative, but would allow to plan an *Asembléa Constituyente*. The ballots for a preliminary referendum were printed, at which point the country's elites intervened. On June 28, 2009, the military took the President at dawn, notoriously in his pajamas, and flew him to Costa Rica. An interim government was constituted under Micheletti's leadership, supported by the main parties and a recently renewed *Corte Suprema de Justicia*. Thousands of people took to the cities' streets to protest the *coup*, surprising Micheletti, who had thought Zelaya unpopular. Crucially, a coalition named *Frente Nacional de Resistencia Popular*[152] organized upon the networks created for the *Fiscalía* hunger strike. It had planned on supporting Carlos Reyes for the Presidency in 2009, but then denounced the process as illegitimate and withdrew him as the election approached. The *coup* constituted a gruesome settlement between Zelaya and Micheletti: rarely a democratic President has been removed by its own party colleagues. The return to democracy through a December election sent a divided *PL* to the polls, with some of its leaders in exile. In a terrible defeat Elvin Santos, who still stood by the *golpe*, stopped at 38% in the Presidential vote, while the party gathered only 31% of Congressional ballots.

[152] *FNRP*, or simply *Frente*, *National Front of Popular Resistance*

4.1.3 – *PUSC* and the third parties in Costa Rica until March 1994

The main opposition of the 1994-1998 legislature belonged to the center-right political area. In the early 1980s a previously loose conservative coalition had taken an institutionalized party structure under the *PUSC*[153] acronym. Although relatively new compared to center-left *PLN*, in its 12 years of history *PUSC* had built a good reputation for its moderate conservatism and economic competency. After two terms in office for the *PLN* under Luis Alberto Monge and Oscar Arías, the center-right returned to office in 1990 under Rafaél Ángel Calderón Fournier, whose presidency was positively evaluated. His father Rafaél Ángel Calderón Guardia, had been president during World War Two and was considered one of the fathers of modern Costa Rica.

In policy terms, Calderón pushed an ambitious agenda of rationalization of the state. Given the large size of the Costa Rican public sector, and the impossibility of reforming it fully in only four years, many projects had remained incomplete by the end of his Presidency. The most important steps towards privatization and a leaner state were taken in the energy and the insurance sectors (Zúñiga, 1995). They included a *de facto* termination of *RECOPE*'s[154] monopoly and the consequent return to Costa Rica of multinationals such as Shell and Texaco which had left in the 1970s, and the loss of regulative authority by INS in favor of an independent monitoring of the *Superintendencia de Seguros*.[155]

To complete its neoliberal economic plan, during the 1994 campaign *PUSC* proposed even more aggressive privatizations, including the telephone and electricity national monopolies (Lehoucq, 1995). Nevertheless, the difference between party platforms was not extremely wide, and the 1994 election was very competitive. The good performance of Miguel Angel Rodríguez in the Presidential race (47.7%) was linked to a positive evaluation of the candidate, more than to a strong attachment to the party. In his analysis of the causes of the electoral defeat, Julio Suñol appropriately noted that *PUSC* had not lost by much, as the gap in the Presidential race was of only 28,000 votes. In fact, Rodríguez had received the highest amount of votes in the party's short history. This strengthening of the opposition put the country in an almost perfect two-party balance that had never existed before.[156] Perhaps the *PUSC* campaign had been too directed at destabilizing *PLN* through direct attacks to its presidential candidate José Maria Figueres, instead of focusing

153 *Partido Unidad SocialCristiana, SocialCristian Unity Party*
154 *REfinadora COstarricense de PEtróleo* (Costarican Refinery of Petroleum)
155 *Instituto Nacional de Seguros* (National Insurance Institute)
156 Suñol, Julio "Causas de la derrota" *La Nación*, 11 Feb. 1994

on the issues that mattered for the everyday life of Costa Ricans. Yet, in comparative terms, the main Costa Rican opposition approached the 1994-1998 legislature from a position of strength inside the country's two-party system.

The other opposition parties were considered too weak to make a significant difference, although in the 1994 election they had gathered enough votes to stop either main party short of absolute majority in Congress. Moderate socialist formation *Fuerza Democratica* won 5.3% of votes and 2 parliamentary seats in 1994, but was not considered a serious challenger. Tellingly, its presidential candidate Miguel Salguero had stopped at 1.9% of preferences. It also chose not to ally with *Liberación*, even if they had fallen short of an absolute majority. The state of the Costa Rican far left was even worse. *Vanguardia Popular*, the country's main post-war Communist party, part of the *Pueblo Unido* coalition, lost its only seat in 1994.

4.1.4 – *Tories*, *Liberal Democrats* and others in the United Kingdom before April 1997

The 1992-1997 legislature was critical for the reconfiguration of British politics that followed, something which prominently included the opposition. As shown in section 3.1.4, the *Labour* party had rejuvenated and moved to the ideological center, something that the other parties had to deal with. In 1992, the *Conservative* party's win in the general election under *John Major*'s leadership came as an absolute surprise. The polls were giving *Labour* an advantage of a few points, but the electorate clearly chose stability over change once left alone in the secrecy of the ballot cabins, as they gave the *Tories* an 11% advantage. Suddenly, Britain seemed on the road to becoming a one-party state, as defeating the *Conservative* majority appeared impossible. In reality the 1992-1997 legislature was problematic for the *Tories*, and damaged their reputation for competency. The party's leadership was also extremely divided.

The key event of this period was so-called *Black Wednesday* (September 16, 1992), the day the Bank of England had to devaluate the pound and withdraw from the *ERM* (*European Exchange Rate Mechanism*). While this change in monetary policy certainly brought benefits to the country's economy in the long run, it damaged the ruling *Conservative* party, which in the following four years was unable to recover from this initial blow. Internally, *Black Wednesday* fueled the fears of those who thought that Britain should have stayed

independent monetarily and saw the European Union as a threat. The party was also hit by a series of internal scandals, some of which were linked to privatizations and the Major cabinet saw the highest number of ministerial resignations of any British government of the XX century. Ideologically, the center of the political spectrum had become occupied by *New Labour*, which took many of their policy proposals, crucially including the promise not to raise taxes, leaving the *Conservatives* without a credible response. All they could do was to lament they had been copied by their historical rival. In fact, it seemed as if the *Conservatives*' political platform had lost appeal, as the party saw its supporters decline from 800,000 to 400,000 members, while their average age had gone up to 62 (Butler & Kavanagh, 1997).

The *Labour* party's transformation similarly damaged the third largest party, the *Liberal Democrats*, by challenging the *raison d'être* of a centrist social-democratic component. In 1992 they had suffered a disappointing 5% vote loss, declining from 22 to 20 seats. In the 1992-1997 legislature they sought to ally with *Labour*, and pushed for a proportional electoral reform that could translate their nationwide support into more seats. In so doing, they abandoned their traditional policy of equidistance between *Labour* and *Conservative*. During the 1997 campaign they only attacked the Major administration and encouraged anti-*Tory* tactical voting across Britain. Yet, they were not being taken seriously as a government option, as they were associated with two specific platforms, a closer relationship with Europe, and proportional representation (Butler & Kavanagh, 2001) definitely not among the most salient within the electorate.

Other opposition parties operated in Britain during this period, but none of them was salient enough to make a large difference for the final outcome. The single-issue *Referendum Party* which proposed to directly ask Britons whether they wanted to adopt the Euro. In 1997 had the strongest showing of any fourth party in the UK until then (2.6%), but then fizzled out and would not run in 2001. Its presence weakened the *Tories*, by exposing them as divided over European issues. The *UK Independent Party* (*UKIP*) was also in its early days, and not yet relevant nationally. Last, in both Scotland and Wales, the local parties were strengthening their overall position, and although both the *Scottish National Party* and *Plaid Cymru* were at the opposition in their newly elected local assemblies, their rise had an important role in sending the *Tories* out of non-English parts of Britain in the 1997 election.

4.2 – Tracing the main events across the cases

4.2.1 – The French opposition from 1962 to 1967:

Growing competition in an expansive electoral revolution

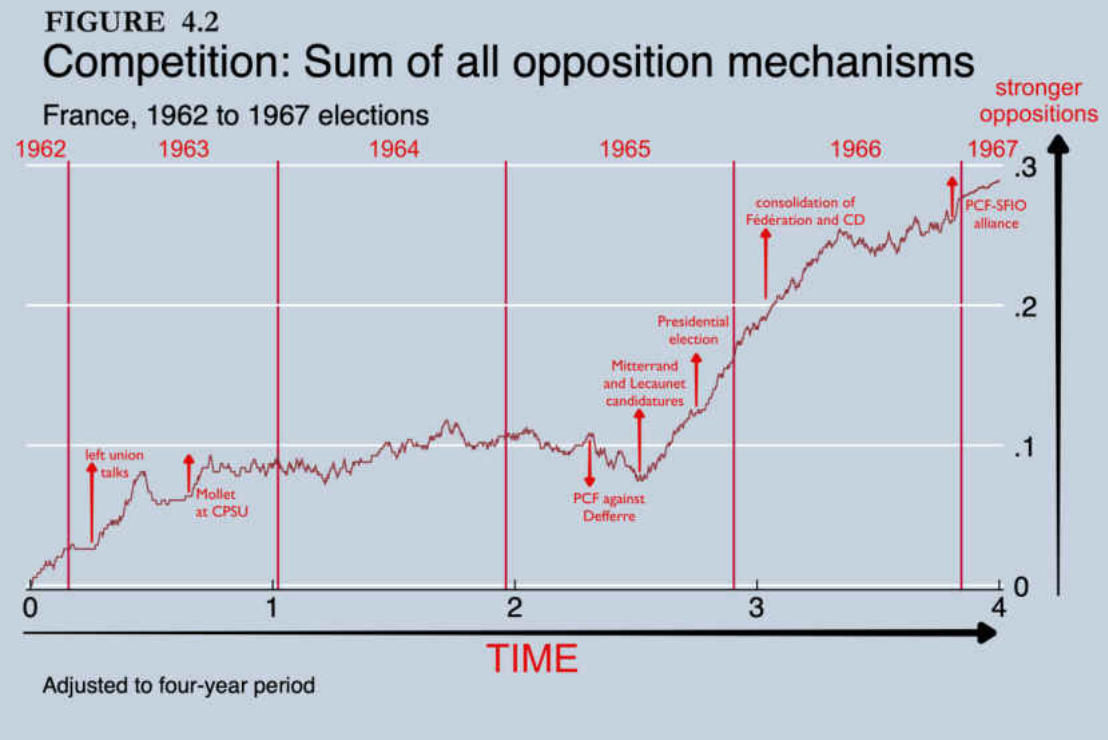
TABLE 4.3 - FRANCE, 1962-1967
EVENTS affecting political COMPETITION through the OPPOSITIONS

period	date	focusing event	sample?	sign	intensity
1	*[December 1962]*	bipartisanism is a possibility	yes	*positive*	17.40%
3	*[January 1963]*	talks of union of the left	yes	*positive*	11.60%
4			yes	*positive*	20.30%
7	*[September 1963]*	Mollet travels to Moscow	yes	*positive*	17.40%
17	*[June 1964]*	Defferre could unite the left	yes	*positive*	13.70%
18	*[October 1964]*	PCF wants own candidate	yes	*negative*	-13.70%
22	*[March 1965]*	left fragmented in municipal	yes	*negative*	-10.60%
23	*[April 1965]*	second round alliances	yes	*positive*	12.70%
24	*[April 1965]*	PCF against Defferre	yes	*negative*	-19.00%
25	*[July 1965]*	PCF can't convince SFIO	yes	*negative*	-10.60%
26	*[September 1965]*	PCF backs Mitterand	yes	*positive*	14.81%
27	*[November 1965]*	Lecaunet rallies centrists	yes	*positive*	25.38%
28			yes	*positive*	14.81%
29	*[December 1965]*	endorsements for Mitterand	yes	*positive*	31.73%
30	*[February 1966]*	creation of Centre Democrate	yes	*positive*	21.69%
31	*[March 1966]*	Federation could become a party	yes	*positive*	19.52%
32	*[May 1966]*	Mitterand's shadow cabinet	yes	*positive*	21.69%
33	*[June 1966]*	PCF-SFIO thaw	yes	*positive*	19.52%
39	*[December 1966]*	PCF-Federation agreement	yes	*positive*	23.10%

MAIN SOURCES:*Le Monde (sample), Revue Française de Science Politique*

In the immediate aftermath of the 1962 election the new French opposition remained fragmented, but then a series of internal discussions came to redefine the parties of the center and the left. This account begins with six main opposition parties, all eager to secure their own survival. The discursive thread dedicated to the anti-Gaullist opposition was the most prominent between 1962 and 1967. The shortest possible summary, would reconstruct the left's ability to present a united front for both the 1965 Presidential and the 1967 Legislative elections. But that would fail to report for all the uncertainty and compromise that characterized the process. Contrary to the strict chronology of the majority in section 3.2.1, the following one is more thematic. It starts from the positive aftermath of the 1962 election, then examines the period of stagnation between mid-1963

and mid-1965 through the internal politics of the *SFIO* and *PCF* and the centrist reconfiguration around Jean Lecaunet. The increased role of political leaders is shown through the failure of Defferre's candidature and the emergence of Francois Mitterrand. Similarly, 1966 was split into a positive beginning and more uncertainty later in the year, before the final surge in December 1966 with the alliance of the left.



Although a reorganization of all opposition parties had started right away, their strength was initially low. The *Gaullists* had almost obtained an absolute majority and did not have to bargain to get legislation through the *Assemblée Nationale*. The left came out the 1962 election with an important lesson of strength in unity. Therefore the new legislature began with the calls of opposition personalities to unite and present a cohesive front against *Gaullisme*. As early as December 15, 1962, the secretary of the *PCF* Waldeck Rochet offered the *SFIO* a future electoral alliance against the *Gaullistes* regardless of the programmatic divisions, especially those concerning the international role of France.[157] The party had recently repudiated Stalinism, following the example of the *Soviet Communist Party*, and seemed ready to play an important role in the country's democratic future. In parallel, the *clubs politiques* spent the spring 1963 appealing for a joint opposition candidate for the 1965 Presidential election, a position that several *Le Monde* editorials also

[157] B., R. "" Nous Ne Faisons Pas Du Retrait De La France Du Pacte Atlantique Une Condition à Notre Action Commune Avec La S.F.I.O. " Déclare M. Waldeck Rochet." *Le Monde*, 15 Dec. 1962

supported.[158] Many voices in the *SFIO* also expressed favorable opinions to an alliance with the *PCF*. Despite protestations to the contrary, after their embrace of pacifism the *Socialists'* and *Communists'* political programs were remarkably similar (Charlot, 1963). The *PCF* was still a mass party, but one that was slowly losing members as it incorporated young cadres to replace the heroes of the *Résistence*. It was then imperative to reach an alliance and break its isolation (Ranger, 1963).

Despite these appeals, the left remained divided. The *SFIO* congress of 1963 put a damper on the left's common project, as the *Socialists* showed some reluctance to commit to a new *Front Populaire* with the *Communists*,[159] and openness towards a centrist alliance. This ambiguity reflected a split party, which was still recovering from the 1962 loss and had governed with the *Gaullistes* only a few years prior. A rapprochement came in September 1963 from Guy Mollet's decision to officially visit the *CPSU* in Moscow as *SFIO* secretary,[160] the first in many years. Yet his leadership was weakened by having supported De Gaulle in 1958, and challenged by the emergence of Gaston Defferre as a more centrist alternative inside the party.

Meanwhile, part of the opposition's weakness depended on the adoption of Presidentialism, which endangered the ideological center. Maurice Duverger (1964) had described it as an "everlasting swamp", as the centrist parties were not suited this new era of partisanship, as they had been born in an era of little polarization, and used to be kingmakers for coalition governments. First, the referendum's results weakened them; second, the *Socialists'* about-face in 1962 isolated them; then, third they were tempted by Gaston Defferre's project; and, fourth, they coalesced around Jean Lecaunet. The two parties that made up the center-right were the *CNIP* and the *MRP*. The *National Center of the Indépendents et Peasants* (*CNIP*) was the biggest loser of the 1962 *Assemblée* election, falling from 191 to 55 MPs. It had exposed itself for the "*non*" in the referendum, but by choosing anti-Gaullism it had lost its natural ally for the legislative election. If Algerian independence had already divided the party, then the 1962 defeat split it for good. One half stayed in government as the *Gaullist UNR-UDT*'s only coalition partner, taking the name of *Républicains Indépendents*. The other half chose center-right opposition: no more space for ambiguity (Bourdin, 1963). The other major center-right party – Christian-democratic

[158] "LES DÉMOCRATES DEVRONT DÉSIGNER UN CANDIDAT UNIQUE À LA PRÉSIDENCE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE Souligne Le Club Des Jacobins."*Le Monde*, 7 Mar. 1963.
[159] Barrillon, Raymond. "LA SFIO N'ENVISAGE AUCUN CONTRAI AVEC LES COMMUNISTES MAIS NE RÉCUSE PAS LEUR AIDE." *Le Monde*, 4 June 1963.
[160] "M. GUY MOLLET CONDUIRA A MOSCOU LA DÉLÉGATION DE LA SFIO." *Le Monde*, 20 Sept. 1963.

Mouvement Republicain Populaire (*MRP*) – also lost consensus after entering the opposition. In May 1963, its congress called for centrist unity, but rejected proposals of fusion with the *CNIP*.[161] It also activated a liaison committee in several major cities to reach out to civil society (Moreau, 1965), but it was perhaps too little, too late. Its deeply traditional popular base and its ideology were both aging poorly in an era of humanism.

Unexpectedly then, the French political center gained some political credit and secured its survival, by expressing a credible Presidential candidate in Jean Lecaunet. Young and bold like his majority counterpart Valery Giscard d'Estaing (ch. 3), he expressed favorable opinions towards the new institutions, speaking confidently about his own Presidential chances. His personality catalyzed the remains of the center by embracing the internal policy agenda of the Gaullists, but disapproving of their rejection of *NATO* and *European Community*. The relative success of Lecaunet, who gathered 15% in the 1965 presidential election, led in January 1966 to the creation of the *Centre Democrate*, combining *MRP* and the *CNIP*-left.[162] It increased the opposition's cohesion, and established right/center/left lines that would remain in pace for the 1967 election.

Concerning the left, it needed to adapt to presidentialism to be taken seriously, so in September 1963, the magazine *L'Express* started weekly interviews with *Mister X*, a mysterious presidential candidate. Self-assured, speaking over many themes, he gathered a staggering 47% approval in a poll for a hypothetical presidential election.[163] In December 1963 he revealed himself as Gaston Defferre, *SFIO* mayor of Marseille, who owed his popularity to his peaceful city management in the post-Algeria transition. He promised to unite those who disliked the General's *grandeur*, and cared about local scale, everyday problems. A career politician not directly associated with the old parties, fundamental to the creation of a *loi cadre* for Black Africa (Rémond, 1964), he was riding mayors' rising popularity following their direct election. In 1964 a *National Institute of Statistics* poll put Defferre at 45% of the male vote (Piret, 1964), even a hypothetical *PCF* candidate weakened his impact (Piret, 1964b).

During this period his presence strengthened the opposition, as it showed it ready to compete. Similarly to Lecanuet, his center-left project pulled towards tri-polarism and challenged both *Gaullism* and *Communism*. Yet, due to Defferre's presence, a divided left used a patchwork approach for the March 1965 municipal elections, fielding multiple

[161] Laurens, André. "Le XXe Congrès Du M.R.P. Cherche Les Moyens De Constituer Une Formation Politique plus Large." *Le Monde*, 24 May 1963.
[162] "'Le Centre Démocrate Est Constitué' ANNONCE M. JEAN LECANUET." *Le Monde*, 3 Feb. 1966.
[163] LA PRESSE HEBDOMADAIRE ET MONSIEUR X...

candidates in some cities,[164] and Socialist-Communist joint lists in others.[165] Defferre's last glory days came with his mayoral re-election in Marseille against Daniel Matalon, endorsed by the *Communists*, and Joseph Comiti (*UNR-UDT*). Matalon and Defferre found themselves at 38% after the first round, separated by 101 votes (Roncayolo, 1965). In the three-way runoff, Defferre gained centrist votes to prevail with 43%. His victory, and a similar outcome in Grenoble (Marie, 1965), made many commentators proclaim that *Gaullisme* could be defeated without the *Communists*. Yet that was the South: in the rest of France *MRP* and the *Radicals* still counted (Lavau, 1965). Notably, in their aftermath, the *PCF* expressed disappointment in the alliances' limited extent,[166] and kept pushing for united opposition, and antagonizing Defferre and the center. Distension signals started to appear when Waldeck Rochet (*PCF*) wrote a letter to Guy Mollet *(SFIO)*, underlining how there had never been a left-wing majority that did not unite their parties. In the same period, socialist MP Francois Mitterrand, founder of political club *Convention des institutions Républicaines* stated that the left's future depended upon creating a Federation of democrats. [167] By late May 1965, there was an open contradiction between the rapprochement of *Socialists* and *Communists* and the Defferre candidature.[168]

On June 25, 1965, Defferre met the press to retire his Presidential bid.[169] "*This is not an appeal to the people against political parties*", he claimed, giving in to internal pressures from the *SFIO*. He warned that any credible challenge to Gaullist power would have to exclude the *Communists*. In hindsight, it is too easy to consider Defferre's candidature a failure, as twenty months are long during an electoral cycle, especially when there is a void to fill. Defferre had personal appeal, but had been unable to convince the parties, and enjoyed the full consensus of only a third of *SFIO* members (Hurtig, 1964). His trajectory was inevitable given how different parties saw him. To his left he alienated the *PCF* and *PSU* by claiming that they had no place in a democratic ticket. The *Radical* party was the most convinced, while the *SFIO* was split. To the right, *MRP* preferred a centrist over choosing between Defferre and a *Gaullist*, and even for all the *Independents*' freedom of opinion, he was still too leftist. As for the majority, it kept engaging the *Communists* only, never treating Defferre seriously.

164 "SAINT-ÉTIENNE : La S.F.I.O. Repousse L'offre Communiste De Coalition."*Le Monde*, 19 Jan. 1965.
165 "LE MANS : Accord Entre Communistes, Socialistes Et P.S.U." *Le Monde*, 25 Jan. 1965.
166 "LE P.C. DÉPLORE QUE L'UNION DES FORCES DÉMOCRATIQUES N'AIT PU SE RÉALISER PLUS LARGEMENT." *Le Monde*, 24 Mar. 1965.
167 "M. FRANÇOIS MITTERRAND Préconise Une " Confédération " De La Gauche Démocratique."*Le Monde*, 11 Mar. 1965.
168 "M. WALDECK ROCHET : Si La S.F.I.O. Donne Le Feu Vert..."*Le Monde*, 25 May 1965.
169 Viasson-Ponté, Pierre. "M. Gaston Defferre retire sa candidature à la présidence de la République", Le Monde, 26 June 1965.

The first half of 1965 remained negative for the opposition because summer 1965 did not bring a new candidate. Given the election's importance, lack of agreement would have only favored the Gaullists, damaging the whole opposition. In a September 9 editorial, less than 100 days before the election, Pierre Stibbe asked the left-wing parties to end all tactical abstractions and make a concrete rapprochement, to capitalize on the multiplier effect of one personality.[170] That same day, Francois Mitterrand announced his candidature, without being proposed by a specific party; remarkably. The reaction inside the *PCF* was enthusiastic, because Mitterrand had been elected to the *Assemblée* thanks to second-round Communist support. The *Communists* reassured the other parties by abandoning common program requests, calling instead for an "acceptable platform",[171] and devoted imponent funding to campaign for Mitterrand. Waldeck Rochet proclaimed that a united left for the first time in 18 years should have been made to last. In early October, Guy Mollet blew away doubts by announcing *SFIO*'s endorsement of Mitterrand,[172] while the *PSU* supported him only unofficially. The Senate President, Gaston Monnerville, also saw him as "the only credible candidate."

The agreement gave left-wing politicians confidence, which was reflected in their media declarations conveying a sense of the increased strength and cohesion of the opposition. Mitterrand's good performance in both the first (31.7%) and the second (44.8%) round consolidated these impressions. Building upon the political credit gathered in 1965, Mitterrand became the main promoter of a *Federation of the Democratic left,* which included the *SFIO*, the *Radicals* and the civil society organization *Convention des Institutions Républicaines*. In early 1966 the *Féderation* implemented a horizontal organizational structure with 21 regional chapters.[173] The center-left's consolidation was also visible when the *Parti Radical* expelled former Prime Minister Edgar Faure for his pro-*Gaullism.* In the spring of 1966, the *SFIO* showed evident enthusiasm towards the *Fédération*. For Defferre, it foretold the advent of a mass party of the democratic left,[174] an intervention which was criticized from all sides, even by Guy Mollet who was contrary to a fusion with the *Radicals*. Nevertheless, the *Fédération*'s strength increased in May with Mitterrand's announcement

[170] Stibbe, Pierre. "LE CANDIDAT DE LA GAUCHE." *Le Monde*, 9 Sept. 1965.
[171] Barrillon, Raymond. "Le P. C. N'exige plus Un " Programme Commun " Mais Seulement Une " Plate-Forme Acceptable "." *Le Monde*, 20 Sept. 1965.
[172] Fuzier, Claude. "LE POPULAIRE : Mitterrand Sera Soutenu sans Défaillance Par La S.F.I.O." *Le Monde*, 4 Oct. 1965.
[173] "LA FÉDÉRATION DE LA GAUCHE DÉMOCRATE ET SOCIALISTE VA SE DONNER DES STRUCTURES RÉGIONALES." *Le Monde*, 27 Jan. 1966.
[174] Barrillon, Raymond. "M. Gaston Defferre Préconise La Création D'un " Grand Parti De La Démocratie Socialiste."' *Le Monde*, 18 Apr. 1966.

of the creation of a shadow-government team of British inspiration.[175] This move was positively seen, even if Rochet lamented that the *Fédération* only represented a small part of the opposition. In sum, the Mitterrand candidature and the creation of the *Fédération* were fundamental in raising the opposition's strength and cohesion, by pulling in the *Radicals* and the *Communists*.

Things had improved in late 1965, yet 1966 would prove frustrating, as the signing of a formal electoral alliance for the 1967 election took a whole year. Early negative news came in late January, when the *Fédération* rejected the *PCF*'s invitation to draft a common program, leaving the burden to its component parties.[176] The *Communists* in mid-March insisted that the *Fédération* sign at least an agreement to retire the worst-placed first-round candidate, to have the most chances against *Gaullists.*[177] Rochet would renew the invitation to no avail.[178] Then in early May 1966, Mitterrand declared that the *PCF* had to be the *Fédération*'s *"privileged ally"*. [179] Ironically, those words risked jeopardizing the whole project, as Defferre was vehemently opposed and the *Fédération* was not ready to formalize a pact.[180] The decision was moved to September, then to November, after the national party meetings.[181] The *Convention*, target of *Communist* skepticism as the *Fédération*'s youngest member, soon took the lead and advocated for an electoral alliance with *PCF* and *PSU,* criticizing their partners' immobilism.[182] The *PSU*, favorable to a large alliance throughout 1966, pointed at the problem: the *Fédération* could have still allied with the *Centre Democrate,*[183] while Jean Lecaunet proclaimed himself interested audience.[184] In October the *Radicals* were still afraid of being constrained in their future trajectories by stipulating an electoral alliance with *PCF.*[185]

175 Laurens, André. "M. Mitterrand Désigné Comme " Leader De La Gauche " Va Former Son " Contre-Gouvernement "." *Le Monde*, 2 May 1966.
176 "" La Définition D'un Programme Commun Relève De La Compétence De La Fédération De La Gauche Démocrate Et Socialiste', Déclare Le Comité Directeur De La S.F.I.O. La Résolution Du Comité Directeur." *Le Monde*, 28 Jan. 1966.
177 "LE COMITÉ CENTRAL DU P.C. INSISTE AUPRÈS DE LA FÉDÉRATION DE LA GAUCHE Pour Un Engagement De Désistement Réciproque." *Le Monde*, 14 Mar. 1966.
178 "M. Waldeck Rochet Réclame Des Accords De Désistements Réciproques Entre Le P.C.F. Et La Fédération De La Gauche." *Le Monde*, 12 May 1966.
179 "M. Mitterrand à M. Waldeck Rochet : Resserrer L'union sans Exclusive Des Forces De Progrès." *Le Monde*, 28 May 1966.
180 "LE COMITÉ EXÉCUTIF DE LA FÉDÉRATION RENVOIE AU 8 SEPTEMBRE L'ÉTUDE DES ALLIANCES ÉLECTORALES." *Le Monde*, 28 July 1966.
181 Barrillon, Raymond. "La Fédération De La Gauche Définira Ses Orientations Générales En Vue Des Élections Législatives." *Le Monde*, 24 Sept. 1966.
182 Barrillon, Raymond. "Les " Conventionnels " Critiquent Et Déplorent L'attentisme Électoral De La Fédération De La Gauche ." *Le Monde*, 19 July 1966.
183 "Le P.S.U. Souhaite Que La Fédération De La Gauche Se Démarque Nettement Du Centre Démocrate." *Le Monde*, 4 Oct. 1966.
184 "M. Jean Lecanuet Attend Avec Intérêt " Ce Qui Peut Se Passer " Du Côté De La Fédération De La Gauche." *Le Monde*, 7 Oct. 1966.
185 Barrillon, Raymond. "Les Radicaux Se Refusent Toujours à La Définition D'une Tactique Électorale Précise ." *Le Monde*, 14 Oct. 1966.

The December 1st congress of the *Fédération* opened with uncertainty, as nothing was accomplished yet. Thanks to the intervention of François Mitterrand, who proposed a resolution that *SFIO* had already adopted, and to the *Convention*'s enthusiasm in pushing the issue forward, the *Radicals* finally caved in. The electoral alliances with *PSU* and *PCF* passed at unanimity. Yet the program remained open, and the *Fédération* leaders still needed to meet their counterparts to ratify. On December 28 – with only 71 days to go – the *Fédération* and *PCF* officially agreed to support each other's better positioned candidates in the second round.[186]

The electoral agreement held and the *CGT* (*Conféderation Générale du Travail*) leftist union also endorsed it, proclaiming that the alliance represented all forces fighting monopolistic power.[187] Even majority politicians stopped claiming the opposition was divided. Signals of opposition strength came from across the political spectrum, with even Jean Lecaunet showing confidence in a *Gaullist* defeat.[188] As for François Mitterrand, he declared that the situation allowed to hope for "*the most beautiful of outcomes*".[189] Waldeck Rochet, commenting on a poll showing 40% of French approved of *Communists* in government (24% against), said that if victorious, *PCF* would have behaved responsibly.[190] Even the controversial *PSU* candidature in Grénoble of former PM Pierre Mendès-France, to whom the *Communists* were hostile, was quickly normalized. Mendès-France himself saw the situation as extremely positive, and had no reservations about the *PCF*.[191] Ultimately, then, the opposition received a fundamental boost by the late-1966 leftist alliance, which built upon the center-left's failure. The personal success of Francois Mitterrand and Jean Lecaunet was also crucial to the final outcome, and led to an incredibly competitive 1967 election. The result of the 1967 election was a disappointment for the left, but it forced the Gaullists to expand their majority to the *Centre Democrate* in the following, short-lived, legislature.

186 Viasson-Ponté, Pierre. "Un Accord Électoral Est Conclu Entre Le P.C. Et La Fédération Une Déclaration Commune Sera Publiée." *Le Monde*, 21 Dec. 1966.
187 Verdier, Jean-Paul. "OU VA LA C.G.T. ?" *Le Monde*, 14 Jan. 1967.
188 "Il y Aura Une Majorité Nouvelle Dans La Prochaine Assemblée AFFIRME M. JEAN LECANUET." *Le Monde*, 24 Jan. 1967.
189 "M. François MITTERRAND : La Situation De La Gauche Permet Les plus Belles Espérances." *Le Monde*, 24 Jan. 1967.
190 "M. WALDECK ROCHET : En Cas De Succès De La Gauche, Nous Sommes Prêts à Assumer Toutes Nos Responsabilités." *Le Monde*, 31 Jan. 1967.
191 "M. Mendès-France : J'envisage Avec Optimisme Le Processus De Regroupement De La Gauche." *Le Monde*, 27 Feb. 1967.

4.2.2 – The Honduran opposition from 2009 to 2013:

Growing competition in an expansive electoral revolution

TABLE 4.4 - HONDURAS, 2009-2013
EVENTS affecting the CREDIBILITY of POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

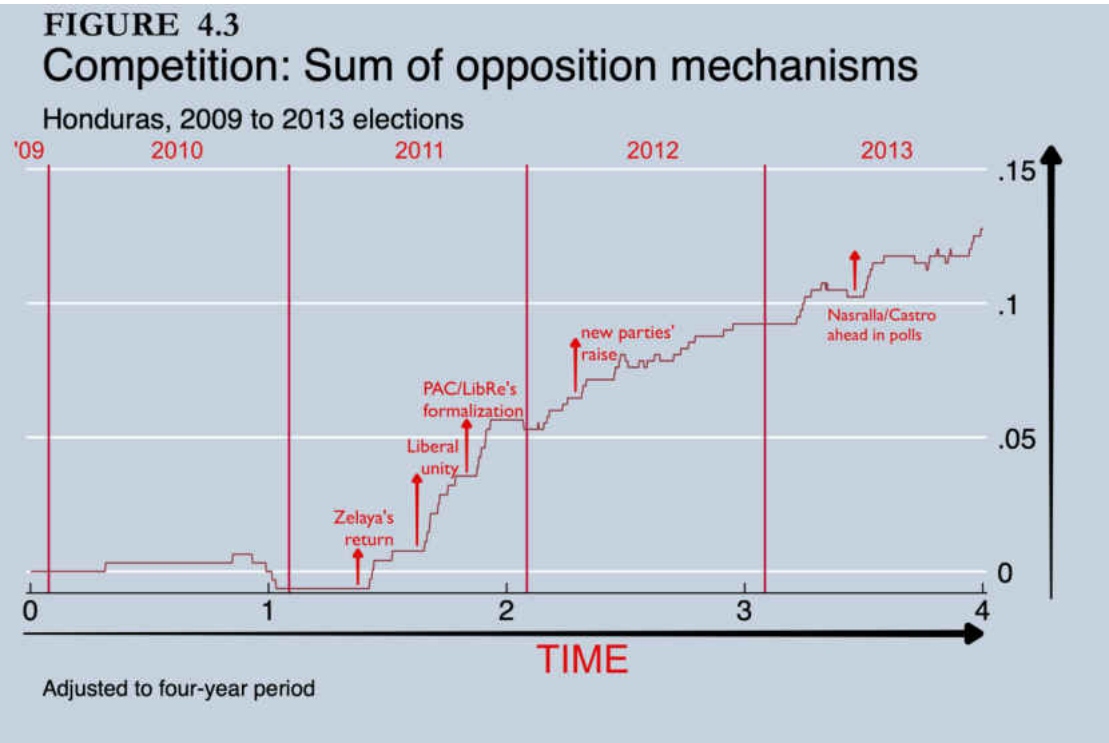
period	date	focusing event	sample?	sign	intensity
15	*[April 2011]*	Nasralla's presidential bid	yes	*positive*	10.49%
NA	*[May 2011]*	Zelaya returns	no	*positive*	NA
17	*[July 2011]*	Micheletti reconciles with PL	yes	*positive*	13.99%
18	*[August 2011]*	Liberal party unity	yes	*positive*	13.99%
19	*[September 2011]*	Frente becomes a party	yes	*positive*	10.49%
20	*[October 2011]*	PAC registered to TSE	yes	*positive*	10.49%
33	*[February 2013]*	opposition alliance talks	yes	*positive*	12.63%
36	*[May 2013]*	Nasralla and Castro ahead	yes	*positive*	12.63%
39	*[November 2013]*	wealth of choices for voters	yes	*positive*	10.10%
40	*[November 2013]*	return to democracy	no	*positive*	NA

MAIN SOURCES: *La Prensa, Revista Envio, Diario de la Conflictividad*

As chapter III showed, the Honduran election of 2009 was a landslide victory for the *Partido Nacional* and the opposition started the first post-*golpe* legislature at its weakest ever. This section tells how the *Liberal* party split in two after Zelaya was exiled, reconfigured after 2009 and how in 2011 two new political actors, *LibRe* and *PAC* emerged on the national scene. Although these three actors ran separately, without forming an alliance against the *Nacional* majority, their simultaneous presence at the 2013 election resulted in a much stronger opposition than the *Partido Liberal* and other small parties had been in 2009. Table 4.6 shows the evolution of the strength and cohesion of the opposition by following the appearance of the main focusing events in the data sample. At a glance, the first event salient event for the opposition appeared late, in the 15th period in the sample, almost a year and a half after the 2009 election. Figure 4.3 in the next page situates the events within the sample's quantitative trends, allowing for a more nuanced interpretation, which includes some more controversial phases. The graph also shows how the opposition's strength and cohesion in the national media discourse grew after an initial period of uncertainty. A smaller number of relevant actors makes this account more linear than the one on the 1960s French opposition, yet some interesting similarities emerge.

In the year following the November 2009 election, the Honduran opposition did not look particularly strong or organized. The creation of a government of national unity empowered the small parties that had never held any cabinet posts, but at the same time,

the nominations were controversial and never gained much traction. Cesar Ham, leader of the left-wing *Unión Democratica* was especially targeted by criticism during the whole legislature. Meanwhile, the *Partido Liberal* had been damaged by the coup and it reorganized around the leaders that had terminated Zelaya's Presidency. Outside of institutional politics, it was unclear whether the *FNRP* (*Frente Nacional de Resistencia Popular*) movement, which had been fundamental for the country's return to democracy, would become a political party. The *Resistencia* had distanced itself from a 2009 election which it considered illegitimate, since Zelaya's group had been unable to participate and its leaders rejected Lobo's attempt of reconciliation on December 14. Similarly, when in late 2010 *Lobo* called for a consultation of different social constituencies for the creation of a Constitutional Assembly, an *FNRP* answered with a resounding 'no'. As a result, competition on the opposition side remained stable, as shown by the media sample.



In the initial phase, the media covered the opposition through the *Liberal* party, which was regrouping after having ousted its own president and lost the 2009 election. During 2010 it was split between its moderate current, and an uncompromising right-wing. In March 2010, Roberto Micheletti abandoned the *Liberal* leadership and Elvin Santos Sr., whose son had lost the 2009 Presidential election, was elected with the military elites' approval, keeping power in the hands of the *golpistas*. Yani Rosenthal, a political moderate and son of media tycoon Jaime Rosenthal, led the internal opposition to the Santos family. The internal split hurt the party in Congress, where half of the *Liberales* often voted with

the majority. Since two thirds of the parliamentary vote could pass constitutional reforms, and *PN* already had 71/128 MPs, they only needed 15 *Liberal* defectors. *PL*'s most bitter defeat came in January 2011, when Congress approved Article 5's Constitutional reform liberalizing plebiscites and referendums. It was a slap in the face for the *Liberal* right, which had been fighting the same reform under Zelaya's Presidency.

Besides moderates and *golpistas*, the third pole of attraction inside the *Liberales* was represented by histrionic Esteban Handal, *El Toro Colorado* (*Colorful Bull*). He had raised to prominence through his *Joventud Liberal* leadership, and owed his political fortunes to gambling industry revenues (Meza, 2015). His brother's alleged links with *narcotráfico* discredited him as a Presidential contender, but his current could become the internal kingmaker. In April 2010, Patricia Rodas and the left-wing *principiantes* current (see 4.1.2) were officially expelled, but the permanence of Manuel Zelaya in exile left the *PL* unable to move forward. A number of questions remained open. If allowed to return into the country, would Zelaya attempt to recover power inside the party? Would he create his own formation, and take the *PL* centrists with him? Given the uncertainty, the *Liberal* leadership feared Zelaya's return.

Outside of the *Liberales* much of the competition growth in Honduras between 2009 and 2013 passed through the transformation of the *Resistencia* movement's into an electoral political party. Even after the 2009 election restored democracy, the movement kept demanding Constitutional reform and ramped up its activities. Organized under the *FRNP* umbrella, its institutionalization had become uncertain after it had refused to field a presidential candidate. Following the *golpe*, the *Frente* had attracted many of the *Liberal* leftists. At a February 2010 assembly in Tocoa, these former *Liberals*, who had a different background than the grassroot organizations of *FRNP*, menaced to leave already. Then a very consequential compromise was found by electing Manuel Zelaya as the *Frente*'s general coordinator *in absentia*. The *FNRP* suddenly attracted all of the ex-president's supporters, making the connection between *zelayistas* and those that simply defended democracy inescapable (Moreno, 2010 #*22*). Zelaya's presence was also divisive, as his *Liberal* ties and pending judgements might have turned into a burden. Yet, for the *golpe*'s first anniversary a street demonstration calling for a Constitutional Assembly brought out over 100,000 people in Tegucigalpa. Very significantly, by September 2010 the *Resistencia* had gathered 1,342,876 signatures in favor of the convocation of an Assembly, more than the votes that had elected Lobo in December 2009. The strengthening and institutionalization of the *Frente* did not follow a linear process. Encouraged by the massive number of signatures,

some trade unionists and ex-communists (Salinas, Baquedano, Robleda Castro) proposed to make *FNRP* a political party in late 2010, but everybody else disagreed. In February 2011, a general assembly voted in favor of formal organization, while considering the fight outside of institutional venues more productive than becoming a party.

Then, on May 25, 2011, in Cartagena, Colombia, at the presence of Venezuelan President Chávez and Colombian President Santos Calderón, an agreement was signed allowing for Zelaya's return. Disregarding the *Frente*'s decision, it mandated the formation of a new political party led by Zelaya (Frank, 2018). His free return to Honduras saw at least 500,000 people welcoming him at the Tegucigalpa airport. To intimidate the *FNRP*, Enrique Flores Lanza, a former *Liberal* Minister who had also gone into exile, was immediately arrested on charges of mishandling of funds during his tenure. As the *zelayistas*'s return increased the pressure for constitutional reform, President Lobo held a new round of sectorial dialogues to reach a final decision. The *FNRP* proposed to include the "*partidos en formación*" (fledgling parties), plus representatives of civil society, the main unions and the interests of corporations.

The strengthening of the opposition happened through the acceleration of its process of institutionalization in late 2011. According to the *Ley Electoral y de Organizaciones Politicas* (*Law on Elections and Political Organizations)*, a new party needed 43,000 valid signatures for running in the 2012 primaries (2% of last election's voters) by the end of 2011. This was easily met and *FNRP*'s general assembly approved of becoming a party on June 26. After adopting an internal statute in September, they deposited the official documentation on October 3, to commemorate Francisco Morazán, Honduran progressive intellectual and President of the Republic of Central America. [192] A curious fight erupted around the name choice, as some wanted a reference to *Resistencia Popular*, others to just extend Zelaya's internal current (*Pueblo Organizado*), and a third group wanted explicit revolutionary symbology through the word "*Frente"*. *TSE* rejected two of the more revolutionary-sounding names, but even Zelaya's influence proved limited, as the party was baptized *Libertad y Refundación* (*Freedom and Re-foundation*). In a November 2011 poll the party, conveniently known as *Lib*Re (*free*), was given just 2.8%, but would soon grow.

In 2012, the Honduran opposition's growth became hard to ignore. Since never before had a left-wing mass party been electable, to be taken seriously it needed an organization able to bring out voters. Importantly, first the *FNRP*, then *LibRe*, were able to co-opt two

[192] "Frente de Resistencia aprueba estatutos" La Prensa 17 Sep. 2011

occasions for mass mobilization already in the calendar, and to create a third. They used *Labor Day* (May 1) to show solidarity with *campesinos* and the strong teachers' unions, and September 15 (Central American independence) to protest government policy. In addition, on June 28, day of Zelaya's ouster, they promoted their Constitutional project and attacked the *golpistas*' continued power. The government and the media complained that the *Resistencia* was politicizing the celebration of the nation or its workers. By early 2012, *LibRe* had acquired all of the trappings of an institutionalized party, starting from the famous *corrientes*. Former *Liberales* occupied four main tendencies within *LibRe*, while social movement activists formed *Fuerza de Refundación Popular* (*FRP*), the fifth and most rooted on the territory (Moreno, 2012 *#33*). Zelaya's wife Xiomara Castro – who had become popular in the *Resistencia* by speaking at street marches – became the party leader.

In parallel, sport journalist Salvador Nasralla created a fourth political formation to unexpectedly reinforce the opposition. Unsatisfied with the state of politics, he launched the *Partido Anti-Corrupción* (*PAC, Anti-Corruption Party*). His political project intended to tackle the country's widespread insecurity, lack of tourism, and rampant corruption.[193] After a few months of media presence, he presented the signatures to register the new party on October 25, 2011.[194] The creation of *LibRe*, fusing the *Liberal* left and the resistance movement, and *PAC*, appealing to sport fans and the middle class, created options that had been unimaginable. In March 2012, a wave of national pre-electoral polls shocked the Honduran political system by giving Hernandez the third place behind both Castro and Nasralla.

On May 17, the *Tribunal Supremo Electoral* officially launched the November 2012 primaries' campaign. Nine parties would hold internal elections for at least one office (presidential, parliamentary, municipal):

- two traditional mass parties (*Liberal*, *National*);
- two larger new parties (*LibRe*, *PAC)*;
- three traditional small parties (*PINU*, *PDC*, *UD);*
- two new small parties (the military *Alianza Patriotica,* and new-born *FAPER* [*Frente Ámplio Politico Electoral en Resistencia*] created by *FNRP Liberals* who had left *LibRe*)

Sixteen internal currents applied with *TSE* and presented candidates; two were rejected, *LibRe*'s *M5J* (*Movimiento 5 Julio*), and *ORDEN*, *Partido Nacional*'s pro-military wing.

[193] "Animador de televisión de Honduras presenta firmas para inscribir partido" *La Prensa*,
[194] "Nasralla entrega al TSE firmas para inscribir Partido Anticorrupción" *La Prensa*, 25 Oct. 2011

This suddenly uncertain and exciting political context, gave new meaning to the war for controlling the *Liberal* party and turned the 2012 primaries into the next battle. Micheletti had reconciled with the rest of the party in July 2011,[195] but remained marginalized and did not take any internal position. The right-wing's candidate was Mauricio Villeda, former vice-President, espousing pro-life positions and strengthened by personal ties to the *Opus Dei*. The party's moderate wing ran Yani Rosenthal,[196] linked with to an entrepreneurial class of modernizers. His powerful father *don* Jaime Rosenthal had lost the 1985 *Liberal* primaries and hoped his son would succeed. In the first November primaries' poll, Villeda and Rosenthal evenly split the *PL* vote. In a showdown even more uncertain than 2008, Villeda won the nomination with 52%, to Rosenthal's 44%. The winner called for party unity, but Rosenthal's faction won most mayoral and congressional nominations, putting the party in a bind.[197] Villeda could have won the Presidency in 2013, but most *Liberal* MPs would have belonged the rival faction.

Things could not have been more different within *LibRe*, where Xiomara Castro was faring well in pre-electoral polls and all internal currents decided to support her. Lacking a presidential contest, something which the two main parties criticised, *LibRe* still held Congressional and mayoral primaries. High participation showed that the new party' popularity went beyond simple beginners' enthusiasm. Moreover, *LibRe* cast a positive image of unity by not opening the Presidential nomination, against two extremely divided traditional parties (Rodriguez, 2011). The *Partido Anti Corrupción* also did not run presidential primaries, had a narrow political agenda, more legible than the two main parties' complex compromise platforms. Salvador Nasralla had the advantage of being known as a sport commentator, and appealed to those usually uninterested in politics. A centralized organization ran *PAC* candidate selections like a job search, choosing people based on their *CVs* and forbidding candidates from speaking after the election. This had the advantage of controlling the party organization, but was also more similar in style to traditional Honduran politics (Lisón, 2014). Both new parties attacked the Lobo administration and the *golpe*, but with diverging focus and style.

The opposition continued growing through the primaries where 1,337 thousand people cast a vote for a *Nacionalista* and 716 for a *Liberal*, which showed they were still a major political force. With 589,000 primary votes *LibRe* offset the *Liberal* decline. Again,

[195] "Micheletti a reunión hoy con líderes del PL" *La Prensa*, 17 Jul. 2011
[196] "Yani Rosenthal lanza su precandidatura en el PL" *La Prensa*, 27 Feb. 2012
[197] "Honduras: Villeda llama a la unidad en discurso de la Victoria" *La Prensa*, 19 Nov. 2012

the participation for *LibRe* exceeded expectations, and showed that its organization had almost caught up with the other parties'. Having kept its presidential candidate choice closed, there was still room to grow. The spaces left in the socially-minded electorate by the right-wing candidates' victories in both traditional parties also helped *LibRe*'s prospects. In the *PN* Hernandez represented a conservative agenda, Villeda the far right, and Nasralla's the moderates. *LibRe* could also steal votes from the *Liberales* that had supported Yani Rosenthal in the primaries. Nasralla's *PAC* captured some middle-class and young vote and looked at making Honduras modern, transparent and efficient, while *LibRe* could comfortably campaign for a Constitutional Assembly.

The primaries seemed settled, when *Nacional* party's Ricardo Álvarez presented a protection appeal (*recurso de ámparo*) to the *Supreme Court of Justice* (*CSJ*), with proof of manipulation in favor of Juan Orlando Hernandez, and asked for a full ballot recount. In a sudden escalation, Yani Rosenthal did the same within the *Partido Liberal*. Since the court had not been renovated after 2009, the *CSJ* judges were still linked to the *golpistas*, and might have invalidated the primaries. A dramatic congressional vote solved the issue, by removing four supreme judges and validating the primary results. This so-called *golpe técnico* was voted by 97 MPs, 22 of whom were *Liberales* who wanted a break with the *golpe*. A testament to *Liberal* weakness, half of the party had been persuaded to vote with the majority. Those who still stood by Micheletti, included José Alfredo Saavedra Paz, interim Congress president in 2009, Wenceslao Lara, and Marcia Facussé. In early 2013 only Esteban Handal publicly endorsed Mauricio Villeda, but large chunks of the *Liberal* party seemed determined to leave the candidate to his destiny. The party's moderates initially distanced themselves from the leadership, but in early May, fearing a bitter defeat, a public rapprochement between Villeda and Rosenthal allowed for a recovery in party unity.[198]

The last year was also positive for the opposition. The clarity in the electoral choice for 2013 increased when a head-to-head rivalry emerged, with *LibRe* directly challenging the ruling *Partido Nacional*. The *golpe técnico* did not impact the new opposition directly, but positively showed that the *golpistas'* power in the national institutions had waned. Differently from 2009, the 2013 campaign was bitterly fought, another signal of competition. On May 24, the *Tribunal Supremo Electoral* officially called to participate in the new election in November, in accordance with the Constitutionally-mandated electoral calendar. That same month's pre-electoral polls, gave Xiomara Castro a comfortable lead

[198] "Liberales festejarán unidad el domingo" *La Prensa*, 3 May 2013

and 30% of preferences.[199] Salvador Nasralla and Juan Orlando Hernandez took turns in the second spot, while Mauricio Villeda lagged around 10%. With six months left, the majority became worried about losing.

In this last phase, international approval contributed to strengthening of the opposition, just like it had mattered for the majority's good press during its first year. An important signal that Castro and *LibRe* were taken seriously came from United States ambassador Lisa Kubiske, who reassured them that the Obama administration would work with any candidate elected in November. They were even invited to the Embassy's Fourth of July party, alongside the other party representatives, something impossible a few months prior, when the *zelayistas* were seen as communist puppets of Hugo Chávez. Symbolically, this had the same importance as the participation of the *PCF* in democratic politics in 1960s France. On August 24 *TSE* launched a general election campaign which *de facto* had been going for months. All candidates officially pledged to behave respectfully, then exchanged all sorts of personal attacks, lies, and insults. By September 2013, the power balance had gone through a reconfiguration: only Juan Orlando Hernandez and Xiomara Castro had any concrete possibility of carrying the Presidency. Their constant media presence, and by poll results, where they took turns in first place, confirmed this impression. Villeda and Nasralla lacked their popularity and organization.

The 2013 general election was largely pacific, and very competitive. As an editorial noted, for the first time ever the independent vote, unattached to the traditional loyalties of *PL* and *PN*, would determine the final outcome.[200] Turnout rose to 61% of registered voters, a very high figure in absolute terms, given how the millions of Hondurans who resided abroad could not vote. Even if the Presidential contest saw Juan Orlando Hernandez prevail with 37% of votes – Honduras does not hold two-round Presidential elections – in parliament the opposition to the *Nacional* government had jointly gone from 47% of votes in 2009, to a staggering 67% in 2013. After 2013, Congress would look completely different, as none of the parties competing for the 128 seats obtained a majority. With many new representatives of the Honduran people, it promised to usher a new era of collaboration, with *ad hoc* parliamentary coalitions able to pass laws on different issues.

[199] "Xiomara Castro y Nasralla, arriba en la encuesta de CID/Gallup" La Prensa 16 May 2013
[200] "Voto independiente escogerá nuevo presidente en Honduras" *La Prensa* 11 Nov. 2013

4.2.3 – The Costa Rican opposition from 1994 to 1998:

Falling competition in a restrictive electoral revolution

TABLE 4.5 - COSTA RICA, 1994-1998
EVENTS affecting political COMPETITION through the OPPOSITIONS

period	date	focusing event	sample?	sign	intensity
NA	*[May 1995]*	PLN-PUSC pact	no	*negative*	NA
17	*[October 1995]*	Fuerza Democratica crisis	yes	*negative*	-10.10%
NA	*[March 1996]*	policy proposal failure	no	*negative*	NA
NA	*[October 1996]*	criticism for hypocrisy	no	*negative*	NA
31	*[March 1997]*	PUSC campaign launch disaster	yes	*negative*	-17.50%
NA	*[May 1997]*	*"caso Hank"*	no	*negative*	NA
NA	*[October 1997]*	*good campaigning*	no	*positive*	NA

MAIN SOURCES: *La Naciòn*, *Revista de Ciencias Sociales*

As shown in Chapter 3, the *PLN* majority was incredibly weak and fragmented between 1994 and 1998. Coincidentally, the Costa Rican opposition was almost as a big of a pickle. The 1998 election was contested by two parties that had just governed together, and recently lost a sizeable part of their popular basis. Yet, no challenger had come to perturb their hold on national politics. Despite a good showing in the 1994 election, *Partido Unidad SocialCristiana (PUSC)* was never strong during the following legislature, or never sure to get back into government. As graph 4.9 shows, except for the final period of the campaign, the discourse concerning the opposition was constantly negative between 1994 and 1998. In particular, late 1995 and early 1997 represented critical periods for *PUSC* and the minor parties. Looking at the media sample from *La Nación*, the opposition also received significantly less coverage than the government. Spending most days out of the spotlight advantaged *PUSC* electorally, since when coverage appeared, it tended to be more negative than positive.

A summary of the evolution of the discourse on the Costa Rican opposition in 1994-1998 starts from a situation marked by *PUSC*'s initial strength and internal divisions in *FD*. *PUSC*'s attempts to separate itself from the public finance scandals of 1994 were only partially successful. Then, in 1995, "pacting" with *PLN* could have advantaged the *SocialCristianos*, who gained access to power and could frame their decision to help *Liberación* as an act of responsibility. To the contrary, the party lost internal cohesion, and was involved in a number of scandals. In 1996 despite disastrous internal party communication, *PUSC* accumulated a sizeable advantage in the pre-electoral polls,.

Divisive internal elections and the *caso Hank* endangered the party's chances of electoral victory in early 1997, but later *PUSC* fixed its messaging, and won the election by exploiting its' opponents weakness and falling turnout. A clear victim of the *PLN-PUSC* pact was the third strongest party, *Fuerza Democratica* (*FD*), which split internally over whether to join the pact for political dividends, or try to condemn it as a catastrophe for democracy. Due to its little importance, it cast small parties as petty, litigious, and unable to compete. *FD*'s vote share grew only slightly between 1994 and 1998, from 5.3% to 5.8%, while its presidential candidate, Vladimir de la Cruz de Lemos, obtained little attention.

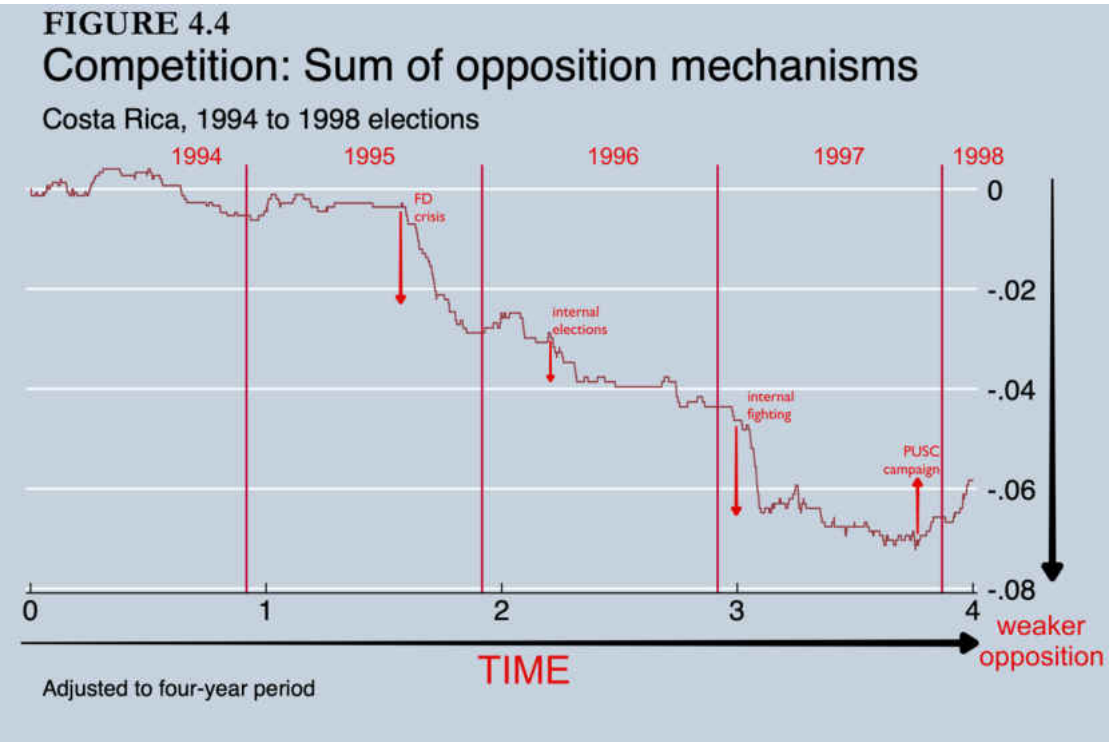


Figure 4.4 shows the evolution of the opposition's strength and cohesion, following the appearance of focusing events in the dataset and in the secondary sources. Given the opposition discourse's lack of prominence, some events that did not pass the quantitative threshold are included. Yet, those events mattered, because they contributed to the deterioration of *PUSC* after 1995, even if the party recovered during the 1998 campaign and Rodriguez won the Presidency. The opposition already lost ground during 1994. Although *PUSC* had lost the election by a narrow margin and could count on positive sentiments in the general population, this image soon started to deteriorate. Internal divisions and the impossibility to separate themselves from some questionable actions of the Calderón administration hurt the party. Of the 64 articles in the sample referring to the opposition's strength and cohesion for 1994, only 28, or less than 44% had a positive coverage. Overall, the opposition's image was stable in the first half of 1994, but then the

Banco Anglo scandal affected it negatively. In particular *PUSC* tried to distance itself and leave blame on the new government, but it was no secret that the Calderón administration could have acted sooner. The strong third party showing of *Fuerza Democratica* in the February election also did not turn into increased political influence.

PUSC had started from a relatively strong position. President Calderón was a highly popular figure when he left office, and he enjoyed the approval of over half of Costa Ricans.[201] Had he been able to run again, he might have won another term in 1994, and he expressed satisfaction for his accomplishments.[202] Meanwhile, some prominent party members were trying to gain from the electoral loss. The most important was former Security minister Luis Fishman, who in August demanded for a *PUSC* leadership reset, to guarantee a fresh start, a request met with indifference.[203] Then, revelations around funds mismanagement in *Banco Anglo Costarricense* (*BAC*) stained the outgoing administration's image. Calderón attempted to distance himself, rejecting his government's involvement in the bank's investment decisions. Still, he could not deny knowing late in his Presidency that some investments had accumulated losses. He had also nominated the managers under investigation.[204] Within a few weeks, the scandal stained his party's organization, when it became public that *BAC* loans had been used to fund *PUSC*'s campaign.[205] As a September editorial noted, the *PUSC* leaders had merely pretended surprise when the new administration discovered the losses.[206] Late in the year, an *AGEF*[207] investigation looked at the precedent administration's actions. Calderón saw it as evidence of political persecution.[208]

Things started just as poorly for the other main opposition party. After a relatively good showing in 1994, *Fuerza Democratica* came under fire for the behavior of its MP Rodrígo Gutierrez inside the parliamentary commission for the investigation of the *BAC* scandal. First, he lamented that members of the two main parties were trying to divide *FD*'s ranks by offering institutional positions to his colleagues. Then he was reprimanded for not showing up to the assembly after having been appointed to the commission. This contributed to creating an image of third parties as lesser political alternatives.

201 Herrera, Mauricio "Calderón despide con alta popularidad" *La Nación* 27 Apr. 1994
202 Villalobos, Carlos "Con la satisfación del deber complido" *La Nación* 8 May 1994
203 Mendez Garita, William "Fishman pide dimitir a cúpula del PUSC" *La Nación* 14 Aug. 1994
204 Matute, Roland "Calderón niega parte en decisiones del BAC" *La Nación* 27 Jul. 1994
205 Villalobos, Lorena & Fernando Gutierrez "PUSC en deuda millonaria con BAC" *La Nación* 17 Aug. 1994
206 Fonseca, Edgar "El PUSC y el Anglo" *La Nación* 19 Sep. 1994
207 *General Auditor of Financial Entities*
208 Martin, Rodolfo "Calderón denuncia persecución política" *La Nación* 15 Nov. 1994

PUSC's second year in opposition started confidently, but the collaboration with the Figueres government had a negative impact. The graph shows a 1995 trend similar to 1994, except for a more pronounced fall in strength and cohesion late in the year. Of the 60 opposition-coded articles, 44 saw it as weak or divided, a significant negative change in comparison to 1994. Divisions inside *PUSC* kept emerging during the second year. Early in 1995, Danilo Chaverri left the secretariat, and a brief internal fight for his succession resulted until Ovidio Pacheco replaced him.[209] Similarly, it was clear that the party was counting on Miguel Angel Rodríguez to mediate with *PLN* and find some policy compromise,[210] despite Luis Fishman's opposition. In late April, the stipulation of a pact with *Liberación* to support a common policy agenda and pass economic reform could have strengthened *PUSC* by giving it access to power after an electoral loss. Things proved different, since the opposition took part of the blame for a deteriorating economy and a long education strike. In August Rodríguez admitted that, over two months into the pact, *PUSC* had lost political capital.[211] The party's president, Abel Pacheco, used even harsher words to express how Costa Ricans saw *PUSC* as a *compadre hablado*, an accomplice to the government.[212]

In early September, the opposition's divisions came into the public sphere, in a harsh confrontation between Rodríguez and Fishman, who exchanged accusations around the latest congressional vote to approve a tax package. Fishman claimed the party had traded its vote to raise taxes with the government, in exchange for subsidies for cattle ranching, Rodríguez's main line of business.[213] Rodríguez admitted that his enterprises were in crisis, but denied that the creation of a national fund for livestock farms (*FONAGAN*) was meant to help them.[214] In October, *Fuerza Democratica* stole the spotlight with the public spectacle of its internal struggle. In late August, MP Gerardo Trejos had voted the bipartisan tax package against the party leadership's opinion, and was consequently expelled from *FD* on September 23. He resisted the expulsion and claimed that – as the parliamentary party leader – he could not be fired.[215] Consequently, a few days later his fellow MP Rodrígo Gutiérrez resigned from the party, remaining in Congress as an independent, blaming *PLN* and *PUSC* for *Fuerza Democratica*'s divisions.[216] This impacted

[209] Álvarez Ulate, Arturo "Ovidio Pacheco gaño secretaria del PUSC" *La Nación* 6 Mar. 1995
[210] Álvarez Ulate, Arturo "PUSC "unge" a Rodríguez" *La Nación* 23 Apr. 1995
[211] Álvarez Ulate, Arturo " "PUSC ha perdido réditos políticos " " *La Nación* 15 Aug. 1995
[212] Álvarez Ulate, Arturo "El PUSC agitado por pacto" *La Nación* 16 Aug. 1995
[213] Álvarez Ulate, Arturo "Choques desgarran al PUSC" *La Nación* 5 Sep. 1995
[214] Matute, Roland "Rodríguez se desahoga" *La Nación* 11 Sep. 1995
[215] Matute, Roland " " No me voy del Partido" " *La Nación* 1 Sep. 1995
[216] Fernandez Milena & Roland Matute "Gutiérrez abandona Fuerza Democrática" *La Nación* 6 Oct. 1995

very negatively the image of minority parties, and was the subject of some negative October 1995 editorials. As coalitions were uncommon in Costa Rica, collaborating with other parties was seen with suspicion inside all political parties. In sum, the pact did not just weaken *PUSC*'s public image, but it was also fertile terrain for sprouting internal divisions in both *PUSC* and *Fuerza Democratica*.

The third year marked a minor improvement in an opposition image that was still very negative. The media coverage became slightly smaller, but remained unfavorable with only 12 out of 46 articles (33%) depicting the opposition as strong or cohesive. Yet, if one only paid attention to the positive pre-electoral opinion polls, 1996 might have looked triumphal. The real picture was much grayer, as *PUSC*'s public image and internal cohesion struggled. This contrast is due to how polling measures parties' relative strength within a party system and not their absolute levels of support within the population. The opposition was faring better than the majority, but was not strong in its own right. Even after the presidential candidature of Rodriguez was agreed upon, the quarrels and fights did not stop.

The year 1996 started on a positive note for *PUSC*'s unity with the rapprochement between Luis Fishman and Miguel Angel Rodríguez,[217] who had been on opposite positions for most of 1995. Rodríguez, in particular, seemed to have become the *de facto* 1998 candidate, having accumulated enough consensus inside the party. Fishman agreed to support his candidature, while still hoping to democratize a party that he considered too top-heavy.[218] The party was also very optimistic regarding the popular participation in its internal district elections,[219] even if in the end turnout was lower than the leaders hoped, partly because of widespread flooding. Rodríguez tried his hand at creative policymaking in March by proposing the creation of a high-level commission across partisan lines to investigate a scandal regarding phone tapping.[220] Lacking support inside his own party, he had to retreat his proposal after only a day, and shamefully admit it had been a *faux pas*. Many inside the party were increasingly worried about Rodríguez replicating the power concentration seen under the Calderón presidency.[221]

In terms of opinion polling, *PUSC* remained clearly ahead of *PLN* through the whole of 1996. In May the projected margin was around an extremely large 200,000 votes.

[217] Álvarez Ulate, Arturo "PUSC cierra filas con Rodríguez" *La Nación* 2 Feb. 1996
[218] Álvarez Ulate, Arturo "Fishman reclama apertura en PUSC" *La Nación* 4 Feb. 1996
[219] Mendez Garita, William "PUSC tras masiva votación" *La Nación* 13 Feb. 1996
[220] Matute, Roland "Grupo de alto nivel indagará escuchas" *La Nación* 29 Feb. 1996
[221] Matute, Roland "Escuchas avivan lío electoral" *La Nación* 3 Mar. 1996

Then in June Rodríguez was forecast at 38%, a 9-point-advantage over Corrales in a poll that also included smaller precandidates like Castillo (*PLN*) and Fishman.[222] Yet, despite this advantage, *PUSC*'s tactical blunders hurt its image, most significantly in October, when an official party communication expressed worry over the country's declining financial situation. Given how the party had been involved in the policymaking process with *PLN* for over a year, the *PUSC* leadership became the target of internal and external criticism, for declarations that were considered irresponsible.[223]

Given the extreme weakness of *PLN* (section 3.2.3), the final year (1997) should have been more reassuring for *PUSC*. Only in the final part, which included the electoral campaign, the opposition's image turned positive. In hindsight, the final is what allowed such a large margin of victory in the Parliamentary contest. That said, March 1997 was the most negative month for the opposition in the whole sample, with 21 out of 23 articles depicting it as weak or divided. The total for 1997 and early 1998 is much more balanced, with 50 out of 115 articles (43.5%) casting a positive image. This marginally stronger opposition was then able to defeat the weak majority in the 1998 election.

The internal primary campaigns for all parties were launched in early 1997, and still held an dramatic moment for the opposition. By late February, *PUSC*'s advantage in the professional polls had shrunk to just 4%, although 66% of those polled believed the party would win.[224] This allowed the majority to claim that *PUSC* had peaked, implying that *PLN* would recover and take the lead.[225] Then, to perturbate the *SocialCristianos*, Sandra Piszk was elected as the new head of the *Defensoría de los Habitantes*[226] through bipartisan support in Congress. Many inside the party denounced it as a secret deal with *PLN*, while compromise should not have been necessary.[227] This preluded to local primaries for *PUSC* parliamentary candidatures characterized by appalling verbal – and sometimes even physical – attacks among aspirants.[228] To make things worse, the internal election saw scarce participation, with minor currents making divisive allegations that *calderonistas* and *rodriguistas* established quotas to preserve each other's chances.[229] In general, *PUSC* lacked a strong leader besides Calderón (who could not run) and seemed uncapable of generating

[222] Herrera, Mauricio "Rodríguez gana ventaja" *La Nación* 17 Jun. 1996
[223] Fonseca, Edgar "El cogobierno del PUSC" *La Nación* 20 Oct. 1996
[224] Herrera, Mauricio "Leve ventaja de Rodríguez" *La Nación* 21 Feb. 1997
[225] " "Rodríguez tocó techo" " *La Nación* 23 Feb. 1997
[226] ombusdman office
[227] Matute, Ronald "Rumores de pacto caldean al PUSC" *La Nación* 27 Feb. 1997
[228] Matute, Ronald & Fernando Gutiérrez "Dura pelea por diputaciones del PUSC" *La Nación* 10 Mar. 1997
[229] "PUSC defiende consulta" *La Nación* 10 Mar. 1997

enthusiasm. Rodríguez was credited as competent and entrepreneurial,[230] but was lacked charisma and was scared of losing to the weakest *Liberación* ever.[231] After *PUSC*'s negative performance in May's municipal elections, the leadership fired its campaign managers. A reassuring late April poll, brought Rodríguez's advantage back to 8% on Corrales, which became 9% in May.

Then the center-right candidate stumbled again in May, with what was locally known as the "*caso Hank*". Appearing on all Costarican newspapers the morning of May 24, 1997, this massive political scandal referred to a controversial *rendezvous* in Toluca, Mexico between Miguel Ángel Rodríguez and Carlos Hank.[232] Hank was a Mexican citizen and a former minister of the Salinas administration who was being investigated by the U.S. government over allegations of money laundering for the drug cartels. Corrales (*PLN*) seized the occasion to attack his rival immediately, and Rodríguez clumsily apologized, admitting that he had been poorly advised and should have been better informed as to who exactly he was about to meet.[233] Over the following months, the Hank affair would be a constant thorn in *PUSC*'s side, and was repeatedly used by the majority to discredit Rodriguez's political savvy. The scandal's immediate outcome was a weakening of the opposition. For the first time, on June 19, a *CID-Gallup* poll put Corrales 4 points ahead of Rodríguez, while another at the end of July declared that the candidates' gap smaller than its error margin.[234] Luckily for *PUSC*, during the summer *PLN* became so weak and enveloped in its own horrible scandal, that the balance between the two parties had the time to go back to its previous levels. The gap in preferences reached again double-digits in *PUSC*'s favor in October. The advantage would be maintained, and the months before the election were largely uneventful, with Rodríguez able to avoid more mistakes and gathering consensus around his candidature.

One tactical move that was positively received by the general public was to have two women run alongside the official candidate as vice-presidential candidates, Astrid Fishel and Elizabeth Odio.[235] *PLN* had to follow suit and do the same, in order not to lose in terms of image. Summarizing, not until October 1997 the advantage of *PUSC* over *PLN* stabilized. The bitter divisions around internal elections and the *caso Hank* weakened the party, but proved insufficient to sway the electorate away from alternation in power.

[230] Herrera, Mauricio "Rodríguez proyecta fuerte imagen" *La Nación* 19 May 1997
[231] Angulo, Marcela "La campaña de Calderón" *La Nación* 17 Mar. 1997
[232] Segnini, Giannina "Controversial cita entre PUSC y político mexicano" *La Nación* 24 May 1997
[233] Villalobos, Carlos "Rodríguez admite error" *La Nación* 25 May 1997
[234] Camacho, Harold Leandro "CID-Gallup da empate a candidatos" *La Nación* 23 Jul. 1997
[235] Matute, Roland & José David Guevara "Fischel y Odio a vicepresidencias" 7 Oct. 1997

They did contribute, though, to the scarce participation of an electorate forced to choose a weak opposition over an even weaker government.

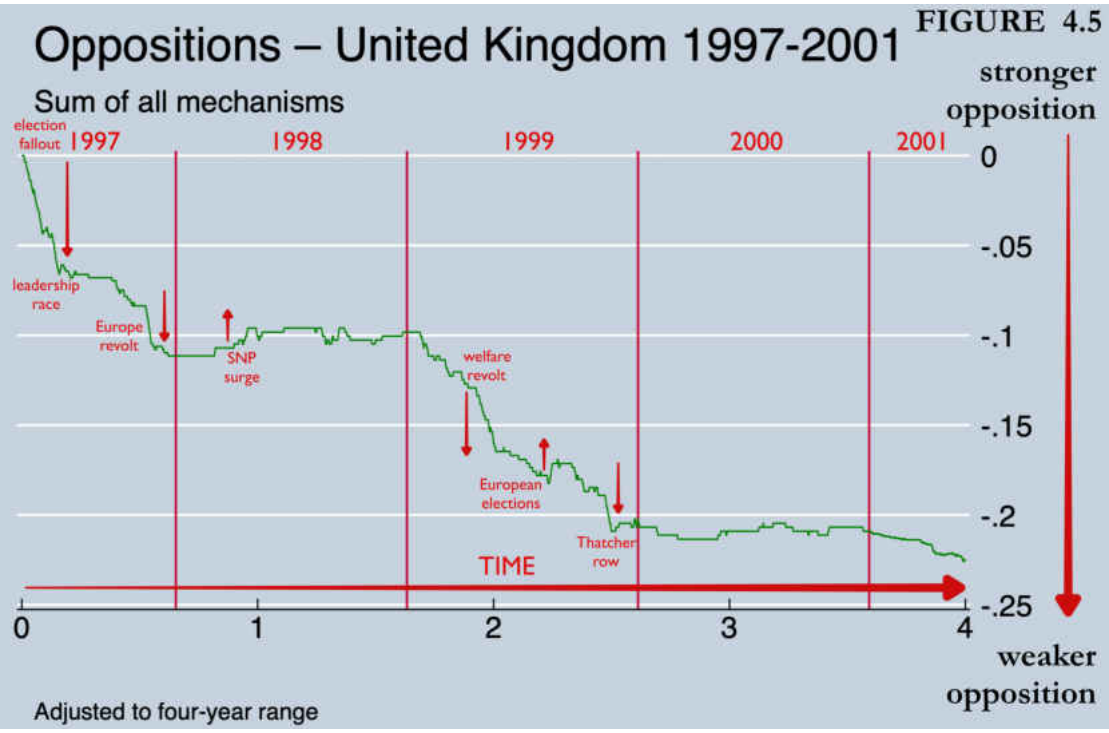
4.2.4 – The Opposition in Great Britain from 1997 to 2001: Falling competition in a restrictive electoral revolution

TABLE 4.6 - GREAT BRITAIN, 1997-2001
EVENTS affecting the CREDIBILITY of POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

period	date	focusing event	sample?	sign	intensity
1	*[May 1997]*	fallout of electoral loss	yes	*negative*	-41.80%
2	*[June 1997]*	Tory leadership contest	yes	*negative*	-24.38%
5	*[October 1997]*	Euro revolt	yes	*negative*	-15.67%
6	*[November 1997]*	Winchester by-election	yes	*negative*	-24.38%
18	*[March 1999]*	welfare revolt	yes	*negative*	-13.30%
19	*[April 1999]*	Scottish election campaign	yes	*negative*	-11.08%
20	*[May 1999]*	Scottish parliament election	yes	*negative*	-31.03%
24	*[August 1999]*	Major-Thatcher quarrel	yes	*negative*	-15.51%
25	*[October 1999]*	Thatcher speech	yes	*negative*	-22.16%

MAIN SOURCES: *Daily Mail, King (2001), Geddes and Tonge (2001), Butler and Kavanagh (2001)*

This account reconstructs the increased fragmentation of the British opposition in the 1997-2001 period. The days of almost complete two-party domination were over, but the single-member district electoral system underrepresented the good performances of third parties in Parliament. Yet, electoral reforms in Scotland and Wales empowered local parties and led to local *Liberal Democrat-Labour* coalitions. The main opposition was still the *Conservative* party (the *Tories*) which was reorganizing after having spent 18 years in power. The *Liberal Democrats* and the *Scottish National Party*, were the other salient players. This account then follows these parties' transformation over four years, especially concerning their strength and internal cohesion, to show how they failed to successfully challenge to *New Labour* in 2001. Table 4.6 shows the main focusing events that affected the strength and cohesion of the opposition, taken from the sample. They all refer to either the *Conservative* party or to Scotland-related issues, and the sign is negative with no exceptions. In some periods, immediately following the 1997 and 1999 elections the size of the quantitative coefficient is among the largest in the whole study (under -30%).



Since the 1997 election was a landslide, the opposition was already weak. Its inability to challenge the government during the whole period was certainly a fundamental factor behind a second landslide, and a second, even more dramatic, fall in voter turnout. Graph 4.11 also shows how the opposition to Blair's *Labour* government became weaker during the 1997-2001 period, but also illustrates how this weakening mostly happened in 1997 and 1999. During the remainder of the legislature, their state was actually rather stable, meaning that positive and negative coverage were balanced. The only period with a slight positive variation came in early 1998 through the surge of the *Scottish Nationalists*. As a consequence of this sample imbalance, the negative periods take the lion's share of this treatment of competition looking at opposition-focused discourse. The use of the *Daily Mail* as a source guarantees a *de facto* more lenient coverage of the *Conservative* party than with a more left-leaning newspaper.

Even from a few years' distance, the proportions of the *Conservative* defeat in 1997 are impossible to downplay. The party lost 11.2% of its vote share and an incredible 171 seats in the House of Commons. Its 30.7% nationwide result was the lowest since the party's foundation in 1834. It looked as if the disappearance of socialism had defanged the Tories, whose free-market appeals, paired with the "*New Labour, New Danger*" 1997 campaign theme had not convinced the electorate. Early on, commentators also attributed the defeat to tactical voting, and to the presence of comparatively strong fringe parties, such as the *Referendum* party, but the anti-government swing was remarkably homogenous

across the whole country (Butler and Kavanagh, 1997). In practice, it had reduced the *Tories* to the party of "*English shires and the wealthier suburbs*"[236], as the party had considerably shrunk in the Midlands and Wales, and had completely lost its parliamentary representation in Scotland.

The first of the four sample years was the most negative, ending in early 1998 with 80% of the coded articles seeing the opposition as weak or divided. The intensity of this discourse was also high, with one in five articles covering some opposition party. The first crucial event within this discursive thread to catalyze the public's attention was the race for the *Tory* leadership, showing a defeated party wrapped in an internal fight, something damning for a political organization traditionally perceived as a symbol of responsible governance (King, 2001). Given their unprecedented negative electoral performance of 1997, the initial months were extremely turbulent inside the party. Exchanges of accusations aggravated the situation, as the moderates blamed the Euro-sceptic wing for having sunk John Major's leadership. These charges were rejected by claiming that the electorate did not vote *Tory* for lack of a clear party line.[237] The leadership matter became immediately salient, not only because Major had resigned immediately after the election, but also because his most credible successor – Michael Portillo – had unexpectedly failed to secure a parliamentary seat in 1997.

To complicate matters in an already divided *Conservative* party, there was no clear frontrunner for the leadership. The internal contest was peculiar, as three out of the five candidates – John Redwood, Peter Lilley, Michael Howard – represented euro-sceptic positions, and hurt each other's chances by splitting their supporters. The only openly pro-Europe candidate was Kenneth Clarke, who had the most name recognition and support within the general public,[238] but was absolutely unpalatable to the free-market *Thatcherites* inside the party.[239] Clarke took the lead in the first two votes, but succumbed in the final round to the fifth candidate, William Hague, endorsed by Lilley and Howard after they dropped out.[240] Elected on June 20 with 55% of internal votes, and only 36-years-old, Hague was considered the 'vanilla candidate' that no-one hated (Geddes and Tonge, 2001). He had the hard task to reconcile and reform a divided party, although he had been voted

[236] Crewe, Ivor "NIGHT THE TORIES WERE RUN OVER BY SIERRA MAN; Pincer Movement by Tactical Voters" *Daily Mail* 3 May 1997
[237] Eastham, Paul "Out Come the Knives as Hunt Begins for Scapegoat" *Daily Mail* 2 May 1997
[238] "Tory rivals with zero appeal" *Daily Mail* 24 May 1997
[239] Deans, John; Brogan, Benedict "Heseltine Hits at the 'Stop Clarke Whispers' " *Daily Mail* 2 Jun. 1997
[240] Hughes, David "Hague in the Driving Seat; New Favourite Emerges for Tory Leadership after Day of Turmoil" *Daily Mail* 11 Jun. 1997

by the anti-Euro current. In the long run, he would only succeed partially, but his appeals to unity initially slowed down the negative coverage.[241]

The new leader consolidated his internal strength through an all-member vote to approve his leadership, which he comfortably won in early October.[242] His mistake was to force the party's hand, adopting hard stances on the future of the British pound and European relations.[243] This decision resulted in an internal rebellion led by Ken Clarke, that became visible when frontbencher and junior Northern Ireland spokesman Ian Taylor quit his post in protest.[244] The *Europhiles* also had the support of Michael Heseltine and former Prime Minister Edward Heath, who were hardly the future of the party, but counterbalanced the power of the young Hague. In an editorial, Lord Blake advocated for the party to split up to ensure its survival, and compared the current internal divisions to disagreement on the 1846 *Corn Laws* repeal which kept the *Tories* out of government for over 20 years.[245] Heseltine attacked Hague for his policy proposal to keep the United Kingdom out of the euro for at least ten years.[246] The leader's harsh response was to encourage the dissidents to quit the party.[247] After surviving a parliamentary challenge on a crucial Euro vote, using a three-line whip to rally in the defectors, the toughest period for the *Conservatives* culminated with a parliamentary by-election loss in Winchester. [248] [249]

In the second sample-year, opposition-related coverage still remained 72% negative, which was a minor improvement on the previous period. Some moderately positive opposition coverage is visible in the graph in early 1998, and it partly extended to the following months. Unfortunately for the *Conservatives*, it regarded the strengthening of the *Scottish National Party*, which had good performances in local by-elections and had an initial advantage in the polls for the 1999 Scottish parliament election.[250] In addition, a June poll had showed how younger cohorts of Scottish citizens (18-34) overwhelmingly supported independence from London.[251] At the annual party conference in September, the positive leadership of Alex Salmond and the overall good health of *Scottish Nationalism* were evident,

[241] Deans, John "THE DAYS OF DISUNITY ARE GONE FOREVER SAYS HAGUE". *Daily Mail* 28 Jun 1997
[242] Hughes, David "Boost for Hague" *Daily Mail* 7 Oct. 1997
[243] Battle over New Euro Deal *Daily Mail* 9 Oct. 1997
[244] Deans, John "Tories in Turmoil; Frontbencher Quits over Hague Stand on Europe" *Daily Mail* 30 Oct. 1997
[245] Lord Blake "BATTLE LINES DRAWN AS TARZAN JOINS THE REVOLT TORY MELTDOWN ;It's Time for the Party to Divide and Sooner the Better" 31 Oct. 1997
[246] Eastham, Paul "Battle Lines Drawn as Heseltine Attacks Hague over Europe" *Daily Mail* 3 Nov. 1997
[247] "Back Me or Quit, Says Hague" *Daily Mail* 4 Nov. 1997
[248] "Hague survives Euro challenge." *Daily Mail* 13 Nov. 1997
[249] Hughes, David "Beckenham Gives Hague the Jitters" *Daily Mail* 12 Nov. 1997
[250] Arnaud, Stan "Poll Puts Labour Behind the SNP" 6 May 1998
[251] MacDonnell, Hamish "Young Ones Lead the Way Claims Salmond; SNP RAMPANT AS SHOCK POLL BACKS THE CALL FOR INDEPENDENCE" *Daily Mail* 6 Jun. 1998

despite some divisions.[252] [253] Yet, these events had little impact upon competition, since the *SNP* only competed in 72 seats, and its strength exacerbated the *Conservatives*' weakness in Scotland, where they held no Parliamentary seats.

In April 1999, as the elections to the Scottish Parliament approached, a new event negatively affected the opposition's competitiveness. The *Conservative* party was further weakened as William Hague faced more criticism from within his own party, this time taking the form of a "welfare revolt".[254] The *Conservative* leader had attempted to moderate his party's position on service provision by allowing his deputy Peter Lilley to claim in Parliament that the future of health and education reforms would necessarily rely upon taxpayers' money. The more libertarian, free-market wing of the party would not have it, and it did not help that the speech had come at the commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of Baroness Thatcher's electoral win. Hague's stubbornness was perceived as narrow sighted, and some prominent party figures such as Howard and Portillo, publicly mocked their own leader.[255]

The constant criticism towards the leadership was costly for Hague's popularity, whose internal approval rating among *Conservative* members shrank an appalling -26%, while the party was projected to trail *Labour* by 31%.[256] [257] Generally speaking, a balanced stance on economic issues that included a more generous provision of public services could have paid some electoral dividends, but while *Labour* had credibly shed its socialist past after 18 years in opposition, the *Conservative* party was not ready for an ideological move after only two years out of government. As the Scottish election approached, not even the local *Conservatives* could not maintain a public semblance of unity.[258] The election's outcome, the creation of a *Labour-Liberal Democrat* coalition government, which could count on 74 of the 129 seats, further weakened the opposition, by sidelining both the *Nationalists* and the *Tories*.

The only real moment of glory for the *Conservative* party in the four-year period came with the European parliament election of June 1999, where they led the pack with 33.5% of preferences.[259] The *UK Independence Party* also had a strong performance at 7%.

[252] Collier, Andrew "Why King Alex Should Enjoy It All While He Can; COMMENTARY" *Daily Mail* 23 Sep. 1998
[253] "A veneer of unity." *Daily Mail* 21 Sep. 1998
[254] Hughes, David "Hague facing welfare revolt." *Daily Mail* 24 Apr. 1999
[255] "Focus on the Right Policies, Mr Hague; Rewriting History" *Daily Mail* 27 Apr. 1999
[256] difference between positive and negative opinion.
[257] Hughes, David "All-Time Low; with His Party in Disarray over Welfare U-Turn, More Tories Turn on the Leader" *Daily Mail* 29 Apr. 1999
[258] MacDonnell, Hamish "Leadership rift threatens campaign." *Daily Mail* 30 Apr. 1999
[259] Hughes, David "Hague's Finest Hour" *Daily Mail* Jun 15. 1999

These surprising results were only possible through a 24% turnout, the lowest ever in Britain for this type of political contest. A *pro-Euro Conservative* spinoff party also ran in the election, with the declared aim of replacing William Hague with Ken Clarke. Its embarrassing performance at 1.4% of votes led the small party to disband before the 2001 election. This mid-term election of sorts signaled that Europe-related issues were solidly in the *Tories'* hands, as voters were aligned with the hardline stance chosen by its leadership. Moreover, Hague used the issue to gain credit inside the party through an internal all-member referendum on the single-currency, won by the anti-Euro option with a resounding 84%. He used this momentum to fire his deputy Peter Lilley, who had by then become a liability, and to personally take charge of policy.[260] His choices in reshuffling the shadow cabinet, which included Anne Widdecombe and Francis Maude, were also praised.

Despite this small win, the party's internal divisions returned in a late-1999 public spectacle involving its former leaders. It saw John Major attacking Margaret Thatcher – after two years of self-imposed silence – for having wanted to be a backseat driver to his government.[261] Major also wished for something similar to never happen again to any *Tory* leader. Ironically, this came a couple of months before the *Baroness* delivered one her most famous speeches, a vitriolic attack against regional integration, going as far as advocating for Britain's withdrawal from European institutions.[262] Both Major and Clarke responded by arguing that the *Conservatives* would not win in 2001 by running a single-issue campaign.[263] This time, half of the party considered Hague's foreign policy stances too far to the right.[264] This was the last period of strong negative coverage for the opposition captured in the sample.

Then in the fourth sample year, the coverage of the opposition shrank by volume (6% intensity), as its parties were simply not involved in the most salient events, and the attention seemed to shift to the government's troubles. In absolute terms, the discourse remained negative, as 75% of articles depicted the opposition as weak or divided. The competitiveness of Blair's challengers, already low in the aftermath of the election, and had been further weakened in 1997 and in 1999. It seemed to matter very little that the election was a year and a half away. Just like they had been unable to recover from the 1993

[260] Hughes, David Hague the Hitman; Lilley Sacked as Leader Unveils a Tory Team 'In His Own Image' *Daily Mail* 16 Jun. 1999
[261] Hughes, David; O'Carroll, Lisa "Major Declares His Hatred for Maggie; 'SHE TURNED MY DOWNING STREET YEARS INTO A GREEK TRAGEDY' *Daily Mail* 11 Aug. 1999
[262] Hughes, David; MacDonnell, Hamish "Thatcher Savages Europe" *Daily Mail* 6 Oct. 1999
[263] Eastham, Paul "Major's Euro-Blast; Former Premier Casts Shadow over Hag Ue's Brussels Policy" *Daily Mail* 11 Oct. 1999
[264] Wilson, Graeme "Old Guard Tell Hague: You're Too Right-Wing" *Daily Mail* 13 Oct. 1999

monetary crisis, the *Tories* were appeared incapable to solve their internal stalemate, because the two factions' internal strength was too balanced (even if one held the leadership). To find a positive event for the *Tories* in 2000, the *Daily Mail* focused for a bit on their not very significant win in the Scottish parliament by-election in Ayr.[265] This was obviously to make the public forget about the *Tory* candidate for the London mayoralty, Steven Norris, had stopped at 42%, and most coverage had gone to Ken Livingston's successful challenge to *Labour* from the left.[266] When in late 2000 the fuel protests (see 3.2.4) put the *Tories* ahead in the polls for a couple of weeks, it was only for a momentary weakening of *Labour*.

In early 2001 the opposition showed no recovery, remaining weak and divided. The *Tories* approached the June election so internally split that Philip Norton was able to trace a taxonomy of the internal currents, which partitioned the party between *neo-liberals*, *Thatcherites*, *Tory rights*, *populists*, *party faithfuls*, *damps* and *wets*.[267] The issue was that the economic liberals had *de facto* separated from the traditional right-wing conservatives. While Thatcher's muscular leadership had been able to keep them together, Major and his successor had not. Hague did succeed in reforming the party, which under its leadership became more internally democratic through the use of nationwide membership polls, but he also modernized the *Tories* and arguably shifted them to the right to avoid confrontation with Blair's centrism (Butler and Kavanagh, 2001). On the other hand, this transformation did not produce any tangible short-run advantages on the party's strength and cohesion, as shown by the 2001 results.

The polls from the final period of the campaign showed that the opposition was as weak as it had been during the whole legislature. Inside the *Tories*, Hague's leadership was once more challenged and he knew that his command would certainly be questioned if a second landslide loss materialized.[268] The contradictions of his leadership were apparent in a commentary from five days before the election.[269] He was considered a decent, young, capable politician who was a good public speaker, and had in fact coined the period's most memorable political expressions such as '*stealth taxes'*, '*all mouth and no delivery'* and '*Tony's cronies'*. At the same time, the article remarked how his party completely

[265] "It's Been a While but Now They're Walking on Ayr" *Daily Mail* 03/18/2000
[266] "Red Ken Kicks off with 55% Lead over Dobson" *Daily Mail* 03/07/2000 Byline: DAVID HUGHES
[267] "damp" and "wet" in this case are used to mean different degrees of perceived weakness, openness to compromise with the left.
[268] Eastham, Paul "Tory Europe Truce Falters" *Daily Mail* 2 Jun. 2001
[269] "THE LAST STAND; Decent, Patriotic and Intelligent: So Why Don't the British Public Get the Point of William Hague?" 06/02/2001

avoided issues such as health and education during the campaign, knowing that those policy areas were under *Labour*'s complete control.

By focusing on Europe and immigration until the end, the *Tories* stuck to themes that did not resonate with the general public outside of European Parliament elections, and they were bound to pay the consequences. In sum, the opposition was constantly weak during the first Blair legislature, and did not pose any sort of credible challenge in the re-election of *Labour* to a second consecutive term. This greatly damaged the competition of the British political system and was one of the main factors leading to the spectacular fall of voter turnout in 2001. The *Tories* only marginally improved their 1997 result, precisely by 1 seat and around 1% of votes.

4.3 – Opposition Parties As Key To Political Competition

Contrary to the concluding remarks dedicated to the majority, which did not follow the initial predictions of the framework, the opposition appeared to change over time in a more coherent way. As opposition parties become stronger, they create more competition, bringing new portions of the electorate to vote, creating more electoral participation. Conversely, a weakened opposition damages competition, creating a perceived lack of alternatives to the current government, and creating an incentive for dissatisfied voters to stay home. The essential nature of this explanation makes it powerful, and complements elements from the other chapters. This simple characterization can be complemented with other elements, especially regarding the importance that opposition unity plays in either direction.

In the positive cases, 1960s France and 2010s Honduras, recent electoral competition had lacked a unified left-wing opposition. The periods under scrutiny are then clear examples of how a party system can reconfigure around the creation of a joint left, able to find some precarious convergence between more centrist and more radical tendencies. In particular, the importance of bringing in parts of the population that were previously feeling alienated by electoral politics cannot be overstated, as it is responsible for breaking a habit of non-voting in those societal constituencies. In these instances, the opposition produced no shortage of campaign spending, in an effort to produce political alternation and dethrone majorities associated with the elites.

In the restrictive cases, the parliamentary opposition was in a deep internal crisis. The lack of new alternatives made the party systems look stale in the eyes of the voters, as both major and minor parties seemed stuck in their own struggles. In the case of the larger opposition parties, internal divisions and clear strategic mistakes coming from the leadership undermined the confidence and support of party activists. This gradually reflected onto the whole electorate. Mobilization efforts and calls to vote were made by opposition politicians in both Britain and Costa Rica, but the public seemed completely uninterested in listening to parties that it did not consider viable options for government. In both cases, the opposition had just governed during the prior legislature, and did not handle the loss of power well.

Overall then, in future research projects it might be a good idea to give a more ample role to the opposition as a determinant of voter turnout, both in combination with and in isolation from other elements. The unity and the strength of the opposition also appear to be connected to each other, even if either alone does not suffice to produce effects on participation. Even if the majority certainly played a role in each final outcome, the rise or fall of its opponents might actually have constituted more of a necessary condition behind these large changes in electoral participation. Even in the simplest narrative terms, any story with a convincing plot needs a good antagonist, something that seems to apply to elections as well. Across the cases, a link is established between the capacity of the opposition to appear as an alternative, as a different choice from the majority, something that the account of party system polarization the next chapter looks at in more depth.

CHAPTER V

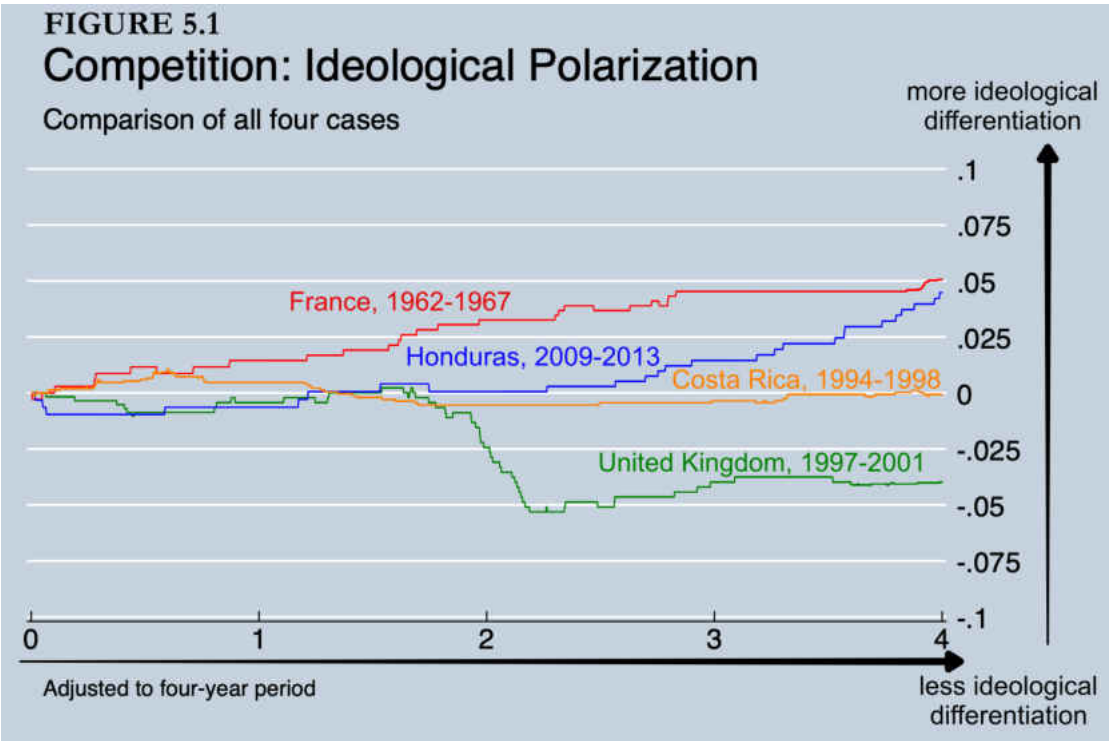
COMPETITION : POLARIZATION

The third empirical chapter deals with transformations of ideological polarization in the years preceding an electoral revolution. After political competition was seen from the perspectives of the opposition and the majority in chapters 3 and 4, this chapter brings them together, by looking at a specific aspect of the party system. While political polarization is often used to express the degree of voters' alignment to different camps, as a synonym for "political affiliation", here it refers to the *differentiation* between the proposals and ideologies of different parties or coalitions. This does not mean that the two things are not linked, since political parties that tend to overlap on similar positions, generally tend to lead to the electorate's disaffiliation. It is generally easier to identify with a political formation which proposes original agendas, distinct from other parties and alliances. Within this chapter the two terms "differentiation" and "polarization" are used interchangeably to identify the same concept. The "policy" and "ideological" qualifications are added to refer to the two main aspects taken by this concept in the internal dynamics of parties and party systems. Just like other components of credibility and competition, national institutions influence polarization, and reforms can affect it radically. Yet, the effect of institutional transformations is far from deterministic and can result in unforeseen consequences.

FIGURE 5.1

Competition: Ideological Polarization

Comparison of all four cases



As seen in Chapter II, the comparative analysis of quantitative trends for all mechanisms showed that ideological polarization aligned with the predictions from the theory, while policy-related polarization did not. Accordingly, ideological differentiation increased in the two cases of expansive electoral revolution (France in 1967 and Honduras in 2013) and remained stable or shrank in the restrictive electoral revolutions of Costa Rica (1998) and the United Kingdom (2001). Policy-based differentiation across the party system was positive in all four cases, which probably depends upon how media tend to report political parties' different proposals, something which politicians themselves are interested in doing for appealing to the electorate. Since the policy side does not hold up, the figure in the previous page represents quantitative trends referring to ideological differentiation. Policy-related considerations are still present in the narrative accounts of the events through which the discourse about competition changed over time.

Table 5.1 (next page) lends itself to a series of important considerations that situate this part of the study into a different space from the other empirical chapters. First of all, the coding for ideological polarization is not as present as those for the majority and the opposition examined in the two previous chapters (the highest intensity of the discourse observed is 2.75% for the United Kingdom, or 1 in 36 articles). This is because, in the media representation of modern politics, ideology tends to be considered a high-level theme that interests the electorate only up to a point. Because of this, especially in the machine-extracted samples for Britain and France, it might not appear in the most salient threads of discourse. Second, compared to other mechanisms relative to competition, the discourse regarding the ideological differentiation of party systems tends to be more skewed for a specific year, which makes it easier to figure out its orientation or the general trend. Third, ideological considerations tend be explicitly linked to the issues of alliance or collaboration between different parties, something which came into play in all four cases (and is analyzed more specifically in the conclusion). In France it regarded all parties of the left and center-left, in Honduras the government of national unity created by Porfirio Lobo in 2010, in Costa Rica it emerged with the 1995 bipartisan pact between *PLN* and *PUSC*, and in the United Kingdom it was visible in the Scottish and Welsh *Labour/Liberal Democrat* coalition governments.

Because of these characteristics, issues linked to the differentiation of party systems leading to an expansive or restrictive electoral revolution allow for a more clear-cut account

in comparison with other chapters. In other words, even if the effects are smaller, they are quite uncontroversial. The expansive cases are cases of clearer differentiation within the party system. In the French case, the parties had responded surprisingly fast to the institutional reform that had transformed presidential and municipal elections in a

TABLE 5.1 - COMPETITION within POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS : IDEOLOGICAL POLARIZATION EFFECT, SIGN and INTENSITY in MEDIA SAMPLES

		France (1962-1967)	Honduras (2009-2013)	Costa Rica (1994-1998)	Great Britain (1997-2001)
YEAR 1	*articles in sample* [a]	345	312	1478	532
	coded ideol polarization [b]	9	4	51	11
	% (discourse intensity) [c]	**2.61%**	**1.28%**	**3.45%**	**2.07%**
	coded +/– ideol [d]	7 | 2	1 | 3	29 | 22	4 | 7
	% positive (disc skewness) [e]	**77.78%**	**25.00%**	**56.86%**	**36.36%**
	difference +/– [f]	+5	-2	+7	-3
	% (discourse effect) [g]	**1.45%**	**-0.64%**	**0.47%**	**-0.56%**
YEAR 2	*articles in sample* [a]	437	289	1179	452
	coded ideol polarization [b]	8	4	12	23
	% (discourse intensity) [c]	**1.83%**	**1.38%**	**1.02%**	**5.09%**
	coded +/– ideol [d]	8 | 0	3 | 1	0 | 12	7 | 16
	% positive (disc skewness) [e]	**100.00%**	**75.00%**	**0.00%**	**30.43%**
	difference +/– [f]	+8	+2	-12	-9
	% (discourse effect) [g]	**1.83%**	**0.69%**	**-1.02%**	**-1.99%**
YEAR 3	*articles in sample* [a]	472	420	1020	451
	coded ideol polarization [b]	10	6	2	23
	% (discourse intensity) [c]	**2.12%**	**1.43%**	**0.20%**	**5.10%**
	coded +/– ideol [d]	8 | 2	6 | 0	2 | 0	8 | 15
	% positive (disc skewness) [e]	**80.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**34.78%**
	difference +/– [f]	+6	+6	+2	-7
	% (discourse effect) [g]	**1.27%**	**1.43%**	**0.20%**	**-1.55%**
YEAR 4	*articles in sample* [a]	798	400	1083	1216
	coded ideol polarization [b]	14	12	15	16
	% (discourse intensity) [c]	**1.75%**	**3.00%**	**1.39%**	**1.32%**
	coded +/– ideol [d]	14 | 0	12 | 0	9 | 6	8 | 8
	% positive (disc skewness) [e]	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**60.00%**	**50.00%**
	difference +/– [f]	+14	+12	+3	0
	% (discourse effect) [g]	**1.75%**	**3.00%**	**0.28%**	**0.00%**
TOTAL	*articles in sample* [a]	2052	1421	4760	2651
	coded ideol polarization [b]	41	26	80	73
	% (discourse intensity) [c]	**2.00%**	**1.83%**	**1.68%**	**2.75%**
	coded +/– ideol [d]	37 | 4	22 | 4	40 | 40	27 | 46
	% positive (disc skewness) [e]	**90.24%**	**84.62%**	**50.00%**	**36.99%**
	difference +/– [f]	+33	+18	0	-19
	% (discourse effect) [g]	**1.61%**	**1.27%**	**0.00%**	**-0.72%**

LEGEND **a**: total number of articles for each case study; **b**: articles coded for ideological polarization; **c**: b/a ratio, indicating how prominent the mechanism is in the sample; **d**: articles with positive and negative coding of b; **e**: percentage of articles coded positively (when over 50%, positive articles are prevalent, and vice-versa under 50%) **f**: difference between the numbers in d, **g**: f/a ratio, prominence of the difference between positive and negative. The color red denotes any value that is negative in some sense (including e below 50%).

majoritarian sense, and the country looked in evolution from a centrist to a dualist party system. In Honduras, after an initial phase of collaboration, the two traditional parties started fighting over security and economic policy, and then two new parties emerged with original agendas which expanded the ideological space. On the other side, before the restrictive electoral revolutions, ideological concentration increased, and parties became more similar to each other. In Costa Rica, the pact struck between the center-left and the center-right did unrepairable damage to ideological dialectics, by shrinking the room for debate. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, the three main parties showed themselves to be incredibly close in terms of ideological and policy horizons, much to the disappointment of their party bases, which were more attached to previous platforms.

5.1 – Different Cases, Different Starting Points

5.1.1 – Polarization of the French party system before November 1962

As seen in the previous two chapters, the Algerian war started a profound transformation of the French political system, which General De Gaulle then accelerated through a series of Constitutional reforms between 1958 and 1962. Given that their declared goal was to weaken the power of political parties and lead French democracy towards a more majoritarian style, they had the potential to lead to polarization. The parties of the center-left and center-right (*CNIP*, *MRP*, *Radicaux*, *SFIO*) which had initially helped the General when he return in leadership, protested the reforms and heavily campaigned against the last referendum in November 1962, which introduced direct Presidential elections. In so doing they fell into a logical trap of sorts. To protest the accusations of being a group of notaries, basically interchangeable, and uninterested in representing the French people…they formed a "cartel du non" that stood against what was seen as political modernization. Although there was merit in their positions, especially concerning the Constitutionality of the reform, this kind of public posturing made them an easy target.

General De Gaulle berated their positions, as petty and backwards presented himself as a true representative of the will of the French people, and won the 1962 referendum and the following legislative election. In parallel, the *Communist* party (*PCF*) was still outside of the democratic arc of the party system. Having advocated for the end

of French colonialism, the concession of Algerian independence partially defanged its foreign policy agenda, but also made the party look more moderate. At home, its politics of no compromise with *Gaullism* were credible, but they lacked appeal towards the other parties, which had done the responsible thing and helped the General when the country was on the brink of civil war.

Yet, the aftermath of the incidents of the *Charonne* metro – where police intervention resulted in the death of eight left-wing militants – brought a rapprochement between Socialists and Communists. The following manifestation saw the whole left come out compact for the first time since 1954. Meanwhile, the rest of the center-left was in much more trouble. The *PSU* – founded from a splinter of the *SFIO* Socialists – was due for a national congress when the 1962 election was called. This had left the party uncertain over whether to pursue an alliance of the whole left, or choose a more markedly democratic route. Finally, the *Radicals*, seemed simply unfit for competing in the politics of majoritarianism, and had also been divided on Algeria and the referendums.

When the 1962 legislative election came, it marked a massive defeat for the parties of the center. In the center-left it was especially damning for the *Radicals*, which had once been the main party in the country, but seemed to have aged poorly. The *SFIO* Socialists mitigated the loss by letting their electorate sustain any leftist in the second round. On the other side of the political spectrum, the Gaullist *UNR-UDT* had won the election thanks to massive support from centrist voters which had deserted the *CNIP Independents* and the *MRP* Christian democrats. Having successfully defused the risk presented by the *OAS* terrorism by purging far-right members from its lists, they had shrunk the polarization of the party system, with the sure advantage of bringing stability and security. The *CNIP* and the *MRP* themselves had adopted an ideologically ambiguous ideological position when they chose to leave the Gaullist-led majority. Having represented the moderate right for decades, their agendas largely overlapped with the majority's, and some strategic decisions were necessary to secure their survival after 1962.

5.1.2 – Polarization of the Honduran party system before December 2009

Among Central American countries, Honduras was considered a remarkable example of two-party stability on the American model. Both parties represented big

ideological tents, although their core tended towards the center-right and had embraced neoliberal reforms starting from the 1980s. A certain degree of ideological and policy variation within each party was guaranteed by the presence of internal currents. The two parties, *Nacional* and *Liberal*, dated back to the XIX Century and also catalyzed established moneyed interests. By 2009, the *Partido Liberal* already had a clearer leftist component, captured by the *Principiantes* current that Patricia Rodas led. Its support of the Zelaya candidature, first, and then of its Presidency, created unprecedented polarization in the Honduran party system, and was poorly tolerated by the leadership of both parties.

Zelaya's ouster in June 2009 was a way to restore the status quo after the president had embraced, not without some ambiguity, a more egalitarian policy agenda which incorporated a stronger attention to the living conditions of the *campesinos*. Certainly, it was "polarization by association" to a degree, because it had more to do with the new international affiliations of the country than with domestic policymaking. In particular, Honduras' entrance into the *Bolivarian Alliance ALBA* precipitated the national political discourse into Cold-War-style rhetoric, with Hugo Chavez incarnating the "red menace" in the eyes of the country's elites. Given how the leftist current of the *Liberales* was practically exiled out of the country, the 2009 contest between Pepe Lobo (*PN*) and Elvin Santos (*PL*) was differentiated only by their different attention given to human rights (*Nacionales*), the military and the *coup (Liberales)*. Lobo was also definitely more open to have an independent investigation of the late June facts, while Santos stood by his party's decision to ouster the President. It certainly was not enough to give an impression of ideological differentiation.

The parallel creation of a *Resistencia* movement that took to the streets to demand Zelaya's return might have already created polarization and differentiation in this phase, had they decided to run in the November 2009 election. They had even chosen Carlos Reyes as their candidate, but they ultimately decided not to participate, since they were too afraid to legitimate a regime that condoned the *golpe*. The participation of established political actors such as radical unions and civil society organizations in this social movement created the roots for its institutionalization in the following phase. It is no coincidence that Ismael Moreno commented in 2008 that the Honduran left had been looking for a big event to catalyze it into a cohesive movement. The *golpe* offered one such occasion, the question was whether the different components of the informal coalition would agree on a shared agenda and agree to institutionalize and compete in national elections.

The 2009 election was an unexpected landslide for the *Partido Nacional* and for Pepe Lobo, and incorporated an inherent tension between a centrist President and a more right-wing party leadership. The *Partido Liberal* was placed solidly to the right of their rivals, since the more leftist wing was still in exile. The performance of the other parties was weak, leaving them marginalized and their importance substantially in line with the previous parliament.

5.1.3 – Polarization of the Costa Rican party system before March 1994

Similarly to Honduras, Costa Rica had evolved into a balanced two-party system in the 1980s. Differently from its regional neighbor, the country's two main parties had less overlap in their general policy-based and ideological stance. PLN (*Liberación*) had never been a radical left formation, but had state intervention as the centerpiece of its ideological charter. As a Christian-democratic formation, *PUSC*, which had been born out of a group of broad ideological organizations in 1982, was on more socially and ethically conservative positions. Although both main parties, *PLN* and *PUSC*, had embraced neoliberal economy policies during the 1980s, *Liberación Nacional* was still convinced of the necessity of tailoring any reforms to the country's social needs. In particular, the current led by José Maria Corrales, wanted to open up the candidate selection inside the party to let local members have more of a weight. Yet, since both Corrales and Marguerita Peñon had lost the primaries to José Maria Figueres Olsen, there was uncertainty regarding what style *Liberación* would have adopted once in office. Former President Oscar Arias, who had stayed away from the campaign because of his wife's participation in the primaries, exhorted voters to choose *PLN* a few days before the election, and reminded the party of the need to resume the social agenda interrupted in 1990.[270]

During the 1994 campaign one main point of differentiation was the parties' positioning towards the international lending institutions and their structural adjustment plans. These differences were visible during the campaign for the 1994 election, when outgoing President Calderón defended his good economic record. The achievements and failures of the outgoing administration explained well its priorities: success in containing inflation and public deficit together with growing private investments; crisis and criticisms came from healthcare, education and stagnant wages.[271] Some of the differentiation

[270] Matute Ch., Roland "Arias se define" *La Nación*, 1 Feb. 1994
[271] Suñol, Julio "Causas de la derrota" *La Nación*, 11 Feb. 1994

between the two parties also depended on the strong affiliations that voters had to the respective camps, and *PUSC* had been able to create a solid party base in the decade of its existence. The fading appeal of other political projects, including far left parties linked to the unions, had limited the options for Costa Ricans, but during the 1994 campaign the two parties were still seen as real alternatives. In 1994 the victory of *Liberación* and Figueres' rise to the Presidency, albeit without an absolute majority in Congress, had also created the premise for vibrant opposition politics during the new legislature.

Going into more detail about the role that third parties played in ideological terms, over time it had become more and more marginal. In fact, in the 1994 election, the only member of Parliament that had belonged to the Marxist *Vanguardia Popular* had lost his seat. Similarly, there were no formations that could be ascribed to the far-right camp or linked to the military. The only variation in this case came from two small regional parties with agricultural development agendas, each of which elected a representative in 1994: *PUAC* (*Partido Union Agraria Cartaginense*), which represented the rural interests of Cartago, and *PAN* (*Partido Agrario Nacional*) which stood for the development of the port of Limón and the Atlantic coast. Last, social-democratic *Fuerza Democratica* that had been created in 1992, held two seats in the new Congress, and expressed more of an intellectual critique to the two main parties, claiming a moral higher ground of sorts.

5.1.4 – Polarization of the British party system before April 1997

As seen in the introduction to the previous two chapters, the 1992-1997 legislature under John Major's premiership started a profound transformation for British politics. Within the *Labour* party, the modernist wing took over after years of patiently waiting its turn, and sidelined the workers' unions which traditionally formed the backbone of the party, effectively shifting it to the center of the political spectrum. Yet, the internal left kept a certain amount of power, and the transition did not go into full effect until the 1997 election, which brought into the House of Commons many new MPs that had not previously been *Labour* activists. Similarly, the party had campaigned on a premise of difference from the past, using the "*New Labour*" label as often as possible, but many suspected that once in government they would have resumed the "tax and spend" politics

of its past. The *Conservatives* certainly hoped that the electorate would not believe that the "party of trade unions" had really reformed. Their negative campaigning was largely focused upon presenting *New Labour* as a new danger for Britain, including some bizarre posters of Tony Blair with demonic eyes. It was ultimately unsuccessful, not because people believed that the *Labour* party had really moved to the center (yet), but because the electorate was fed up with the *Conservatives*.

The centrist repositioning of *Labour* forced the *Liberal Democrats* to abandon their politics of equidistance between the two main parties, which it had kept since their formation for the 1983 election. Determined to remove the *Conservatives* from power after 18 years, they carefully chose their candidates and prepared the electorate for creating strategic voting against the *Tories*. In addition, voters associated the party to the issue of proportional representation. Such a reform would have provoked a radical transformation of the British party system, but it lacked the popular support and media presence to make it salient on the national scale. The party leadership attempted to push it in a series of collaborative talks with the *Labour* party, which also included the hypothesis of a coalition government in case neither of the main parties reached an absolute majority in the commons. It also put the *Conservative* party with its back against the wall, undecisive whether to criticize *Labour* for having stolen its agenda, and still unable to occupy the far right of the political spectrum. In addition, the core *Tory* economic proposals, rooted in private provision of public goods and free market capitalism were certainly different from the other parties', but had shown their limits and certainly did not sound fresh to the electorate after 18 years.

Labour's landslide in the 1997 election had some important consequences for party system polarization. It reduced differentiation in the party system by legitimizing the position of the new centrist leadership within the party, and made compromise with the *Liberal Democrats* unnecessary. The good performance of the *Referendum Party*, coming in fourth, indicated that there was some space for parties that wanted to adopt a strong stance on the issue of Britain-Europe relations. *Labour*'s campaign platform, which were mostly no-nonsense blends of state intervention and market solutions, had its most ambitious element in the Constitutional reform project that would have brought devolution and local parliaments in Scotland and Wales. This policy successfully pushed the *Tories* out of Scotland, and made them almost irrelevant in Wales. Outside of England then, the *Scottish National Party* had a good result in 1997, gaining three extra seats in Westminster which gave it a platform to push the issue of Scottish independence during the new legislature.

Plaid Cymru remained at the same levels as 1992 in Wales, as it also prepared for a wider role once *Labour* implemented its devolution agenda. As for far left and the far right formations, they remained outside of the House of Commons.

5.2 – Tracing The Main Events Across The Cases

5.2.1 – Polarization of the French party system from 1962 to 1967: Growing competition in an expansive electoral revolution

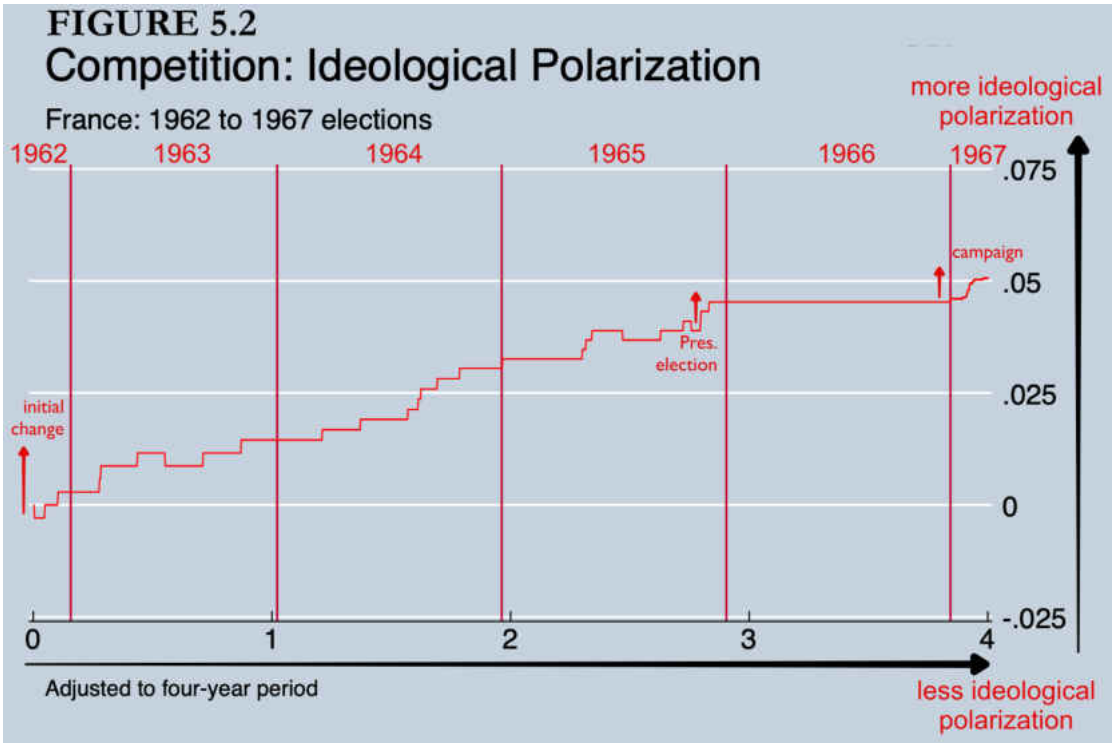
TABLE **5.2**- FRANCE, 1962-1967
EVENTS affecting political COMPETITION through party system POLARIZATION

period	date	focusing event	sample?	sign	intensity
NA	*[December 1962]*	post-electoral reconfiguration	yes	*positive*	NA
NA	*[May 1963]*	MRP conference	yes	*positive*	NA
NA	*[November 1963]*	SFIO delegation in Moscow	yes	*positive*	NA
NA	*[January 1965]*	municipal elections	yes	*negative*	NA
NA	*[November 1965]*	Presidential election	yes	*positive*	NA
NA	*[January 1967]*	'dualism' rules campaign	yes	*positive*	NA

MAIN SOURCES:*Le Monde (sample), Revue Française de Science Politique*

The introduction showed how the reconfiguration of the French party system had already started in 1958, but the events of 1962 accelerated the process. After the dust settled on the 1962 election, the shrinking of the ideological center brought a first increase in the polarization of the French party system. As the *CNIP* Independents, Christian democrats (*MRP*), radicals and socialists (*SFIO*), all significantly reduced their parliamentary presence, federative projects were discussed on both the center-left and the center-right. Majoritarianism posed a real risk of isolation and disappearance for those formations that insisted upon running alone, yet some understandable resistance was felt on all sides. The transformation happened very rapidly, and passed through the Defferre, Lecaunet and Mitterrand presidential candidatures which also find ample space in chapters III, IV and VI. If in Chapter IV their importance was linked to how they contributed to the strengthening and unity of the left, and in chapter 6 for how they increased the credibility of the presidential system, here they constitute important steps in the evolution of the party system towards a tri-polar dimension. The crux of the matter was whether

the center-left and the center-right could form an alliance or new party that could be a third, democratic pole to Gaullism and Communism to mitigate polarization.



As portrayed in figure 5.2, the process that increased party system differentiation followed a gradual pattern, without any significant contradictory events to reverse a positive trend. The absence of articles claiming that polarization was reducing makes the account clearer: 90% of all articles coded for polarization in the whole period saw the party system as becoming more clearly differentiated over time. At the same time, the number of articles coded for this mechanism was relatively small, probably due to how the kind of editorials commenting on ideological questions might have been excluded from the machine-extracted sample. Fortunately, there is no shortage of commentary from the academic reviews of the time, given that ideology played a central role in the 1960s French scholarly debate. Compared to other European countries, French parties were malleable organizations, which made their rapid ideological transformation possible. This increase in polarization led people to the polls in 1967, overcoming the risk of a transformation of legislative elections into second-order political contests to Presidential races.

Of the 17 articles that covered ideological polarization in the first two years of the sample, only 2 saw it negatively, or declining. The initial phase, following the 1962 election saw a series of strategic decisions inside of all political parties. The Gaullist victory and the centrist defeat accelerated the process started with the introduction of direct Presidential election. In France, the dominant scholarly discourse saw political parties as

indispensable, but also considering them perennially in need of reform (Lavau, 1963). Interest groups kept separate from the party system, despised cadre parties and advocated for the creation of open political tents. Similarly, the political involvement of informed citizens was based on a philosophy that saw merely voting as insufficient, but viewed partisanship as a burden to one's career. Yet, the necessity to stabilize a system that had been constantly unable to deliver coherent to policy agendas, led many to advocate for party system simplification, and look with longing at the organized majority-versus-opposition politics seen on the other side of the *Manche*. The question was then: would this unavoidable transformation lead to more polarized left-right dynamics? Or would it result in a tripolar or quadripolar system where centrism maintained an important role?

The effect of the 1962 election was felt inside each of the French political formations. The national meeting of the Christian-democratic *Mouvement Républicain Populaire* (MRP) in May 1963 started the dances. Its members proclaimed ready to be part of some bigger democratic formation.[272] As a form of resistance against left-right dynamics they proposed the foundation of a flexible *parti-carrefour* (crossroads-party) of the center, while remaining committed to anti-Gaullism (Moreau, 1963). Taking the first step, made them the pole of attraction that was instrumental in the creation of the *Centre Democrate* and in presenting a centrist candidate for the 1965 Presidential election. As a *Gaullist* weekly commented, the permanence of centrist parties in the opposition played into the *Communists'* plans, and increased the overall polarization of the system.[273] Overall, the behavior of the *Gaullists* in parliament – where they took over the leadership of all legislative commissions and kept iron-clad party discipline – angered all parties. Especially after De Gaulle had used his power for the 1962 referendum, calls for unity against the regime were common. They came from all over the political spectrum, but also from political clubs and groups of opinion. Within the *Club des Jacobins*, expression of the democratic left, the mission was clear: a joint candidate of the non-Gaullists needed to be found as soon as possible.[274]

The *Communist PCF* had a fundamental role in the whole process, both because of the nature of its internal decisions, and of the reactions they triggered in the other parties. As the most international party, and having held its last congress in 1961, it was now ready for the pacific way to socialism proposed by Khrushchev in Russia. The end of the Algerian

272 Laurens, André "Le M.R.P. se prononce sur le régime présidentiel préconisé par M. Lecanuet" *Le Monde*, 27 May 1963.
273 "" NOTRE RÉPUBLIQUE " : l'impossible antigaullisme." *Le Monde*, 16 May 1964.
274 "LES DÉMOCRATES DEVRONT DÉSIGNER UN CANDIDAT UNIQUE À LA PRÉSIDENCE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE, souligne le Club des Jacobins." 7 Mar. 1963

conflict also helped the party to appear more moderate while retaining its ideological charge (Ranger, 1963), once the party had adopted a position in favor of colonial self-determination (Ranger, 1964). As seen in chapter 3, media-reported interventions of Communist politicians called for the unity of the left, in a relentless effort to break the party's isolation. The exclusion of *PCF* from democratic politics had been an important factor for the permanence of centrism even after the Fifth Republic era started in 1958 (Duverger, 1964). Complementarily, the passage of the *SFIO* Socialists to the opposition and their tremendous loss in 1962 were followed by the adoption of a more radical position, which is what the Communists had been waiting for.

The success of the organization of national committee for the military denuclearization of France, which included the *Radicals*, the *SFIO*, the *PSU* and the *PCF* alongside many non-governmental and societal organizations was another positive signal of convergence in the leftist opposition.[275] Evidence of the existence of a shared platform came from Guy Mollet who, speaking to young party militants, warned them of the importance of nipping in the bud the resurgence of French nationalism.[276] Similarly, the trip to Moscow taken by the *SFIO* secretary in November 1963, the first of its kind in a decade, signaled that the Socialists were moving closer to the radical left.[277]

The rise and fall of the presidential candidature of Gaston Defferre, examined at length in chapter 4, showed a similar political reality: an alliance between the center-left and the center-right might have been feasible in some cities and regions, but did not hold at the national level. In parallel, his failure had important repercussions on the trajectory of the *Federation de la Gauche*, which was being created in the same period and included *SFIO*, the Radicals and the political club *Convention des Institutions Republicaines*. The Communists knew that the unity candidate of the left could not come from their party (Duhamel, 1966), and that if Defferre had run in 1965, it would have been hard for a Communist politician to obtain a good result against him and De Gaulle.

Another element which accelerated the process towards political dualism and clear differentiation was the reform of municipal elections that the Pompidou government passed in June 1964. Until then, large cities (over 120,000 people) had used a proportional representation system which delivered fragmented, if balanced, political outcomes. The

[275] "PLUSIEURS DIZAINES DE MILLIERS DE PERSONNES ont participé au rassemblement organisé par le Comité national contre la force de frappe" *Le Monde*, 28 Apr. 1964.
[276] "" Votre combat essentiel est de tuer le nationalisme français qui renait " déclare M. Guy Mollet" *Le Monde*, 30 Mar 1964.
[277] "M. GUY MOLLET CONDUIRA A MOSCOU LA DÉLÉGATION DE LA S.F.I.O." *Le Monde*, 20 Sep. 1963.

reform introduced two-round plurality over 30,000 inhabitants (Goguel, 1965). This transformed the municipal elections of 14 and 21 March 1965 into a political laboratory for coalition experiments. France had never had a nationally cohesive political system, and this was no exception. Since the parties of the center were locally powerful , and had well-respected representatives, many centrist coalitions, incorporating the *Radicals* and the *SFIO* often won in the countryside and even in larger towns such as Grenoble and Marseille. This led many to believe that the Defferre candidature was viable within the whole country. They were proved wrong by his official retirement from the presidential race in June.

The Presidential election of 1965 showed a series of important things. First, it demonstrated the viability of a candidature of the left without help from the center-right parties (Ch. 3). Not only the first-round performance had been positive, but a sizeable portion of the centrist electorate had chosen Mitterrand over De Gaulle in the run-off. Second, Jean Lecaunet's centrist candidature only obtained 15% of preferences. That this was a good result is telling of how the shrinking of the center seen in 1962 was considered irreversible, as in the 1958 election, *CNIP* and *MRP* had obtained a joint 30%. Third, the far-right candidature of Tixier-Vignancour did well at 5% and showed there was room to the right of Gaullism that could be exploited electorally. It would institutionalize with the creation of the *Front National* in 1972. In sum, these separate considerations demonstrate that the new French political climate under Presidentialism was more obviously polarized than it had been in the previous decades.

Then the second round of the presidential election gave the French electorate a taste of national-level majoritarianism, something that had never been seen before in the country.[278] Remarkably, both Lecaunet and Tixier-Vignancour exhorted the electorate to vote for Mitterrand after their first-round defeat, instead of choosing silence or advocating for abstention. The satisfaction of all parties of the left was evident, since they were becoming the real opposition. The successful effort around the joint candidature offered a positive legacy to build upon during the following year. The absence of articles dealing with ideological polarization in the three main threads of political discourse for 1966 is a testimony to how the new party system had adopted new lines of separation, which only needed a political alliance. In this sense, it is extremely important that even before the formal electoral agreement between Socialists and Communists was signed in December 1966, many French believed that the Communists were part of the Federation of the Left.

[278] "M. François Mitterrand : c'est la bataille de la gauche contre la droite" *Le Monde,* 9 Dec. 1965.

Although this was technically incorrect, it signaled that the creation of a unitary leftist camp in the mind of the public was accomplished.

The final period of January and February 1967, saw the Communist party being especially active in propagating its positions as a reformed party that now stood for peace and democracy.[279] Similarly, the left strived to discredit the existence of a left-wing *Gaullism*, the so-called *gauche Gaulliste*, which was merely seen as a ploy to steal voters from the other parties.[280] Even Maurice Duverger, who had been the main proponent of the theory of centrist dominance in French politics, saw the 1967 election as a more important crossroads than the 1962 referendum on presidentialism. In an editorial, he maintained that in case of a good result of the left, France might actually be moving towards dualism and its party system would forever change.[281] Prime Minister Georges Pompidou fed into this transformative vision with his remarks that the *Centre Democrate* was a satellite of the opposition, since the country was already divided into two camps.[282] Finally, De Gaulle's appeal to the electorate on February 10, which provoked the disapproval of all opposition politicians, placed him solidly as a partisan leader, not as a political arbiter. The evolution observed over these four and a half years generated the most polarized election that France had seen until then, and this clarity of choice, unexpected for a legislative election, contributed to the incredible surge in turnout seen in 1967 in comparison to 1962.

5.2.2 – Polarization of the Honduran party system from 2009 to 2013: Growing competition in an expansive electoral revolution

TABLE **5.3**- HONDURAS, 2009-2013
EVENTS affecting political COMPETITION through party system POLARIZATION

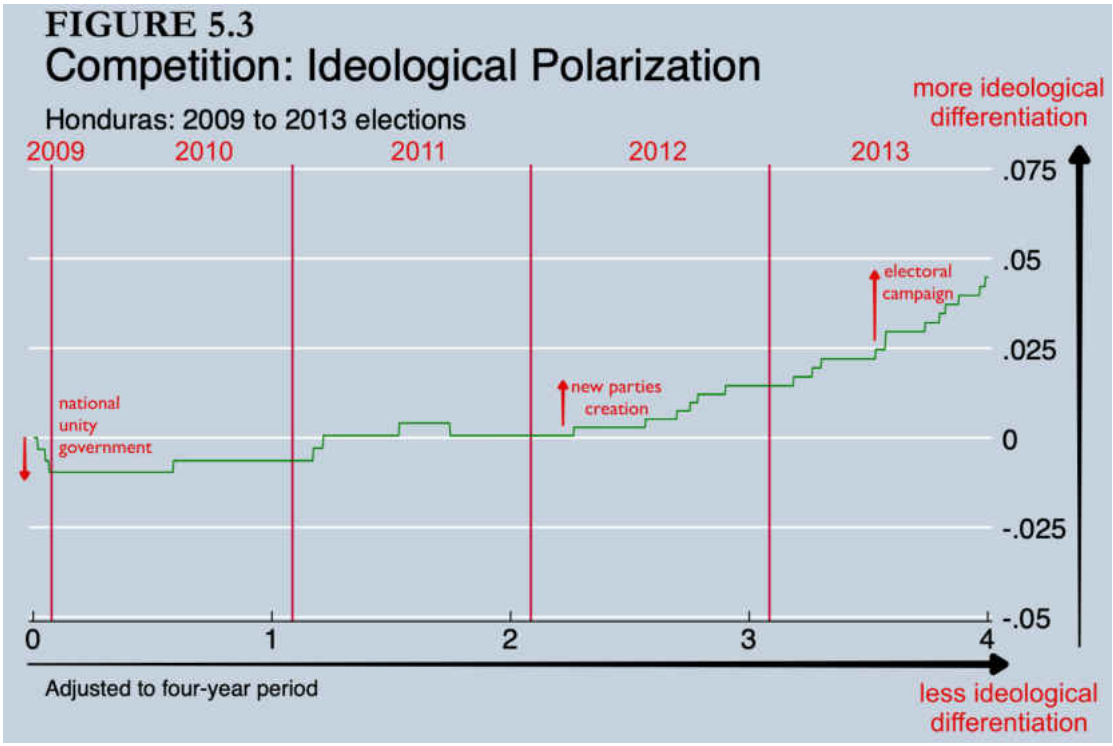
period	date	focusing event	sample?	sign	intensity
NA	*[December 2009]*	national unity government	yes	*negative*	NA
NA	*[December 2011]*	Liberales criticize Lobo	yes	*positive*	NA
NA	*[June 2011]*	Frente becomes LibRe	yes	*positive*	NA
NA	*[March 2012]*	creation of PAC	yes	*positive*	NA
NA	*[September 2013]*	polarizing campaign	yes	*positive*	NA

MAIN SOURCES: *La Prensa, Revista Envio, Diario de la Conflictividad*

[279] "UN " APPEL AUX ÉLECTEURS "" *Le Monde,* 1 Jan. 1967.
[280] "M. GUY MOLLET : il faut tuer la légende d'une politique gaulliste de gauche." *Le Monde,* 30 Jan. 1967.
[281] Duverger, Maurice "Du centrisme au dualisme ?" *Le Monde,* 8 Feb. 1967.
[282] Viasson Ponté, Pierre "MM. POMPIDOU ET WALDECK ROCKET ACCENTUENT LA DIVISION EN DEUX CAMPS" *Le Monde,* 9 Feb. 1967.

Similar to what section 4.2 showed for the opposition, the discourse on party system polarization in the 2009-2013 legislature in Honduras can be divided among two phases. In the early one, the landslide victory of the *Nacionales* and the creation of a government of national unity under Lobo's presidency reduced differentiation. Then in the two following years the successful organization of two new parties with leftist and anti-corruption agendas broke the status quo and introduced real alternatives. Certainly, a part of the polarization seen in the sample depends on the attacks that the two traditional parties (*Nacional* and *Liberal*) exchanged inside and outside of national Congress. With Zelaya's current out of the country, the *Liberales* started criticizing Lobo from the right, and depicted him as too similar to his predecessor. In this sense, the shift to the right made by the *PL* leadership, which had remained solidly pro-golpe and had attracted the military elites, contributed in polarizing the party system. The return of Zelaya, and his wife's leadership of *LibRe* lent legitimacy to the new party, together with the political capital offered by the former *Liberales* that formed four out of five of the new party's currents. In the sample, the number of articles dealing with party-related polarization was initially very small, 4 in the first year, 3 of which were negatively coded. This is likely due to the existence of more pressing political themes than the ideological positioning of the parties, as the party was still very close to the golpe of June 2009.

FIGURE 5.3
Competition: Ideological Polarization
Honduras: 2009 to 2013 elections



Once democracy was formally restored with the November 2009 election, the main political parties attempted to build an initial political climate among of solidarity and mutual help, at least on the surface. Losing Presidential candidate Elvin Santos offered to

help president elect Lobo right after the election.[283] Lobo appreciated the gesture, and one of his first announcements was that he would pull Honduras out of the *Alianza Bolivariana* (*ALBA*) international agreement.[284] This signaled that he was abandoning the internal and external left-wing positioning of the ousted president. As the *Nacionales* had a reputation for being more conservative, this came as no surprise, but also made the two parties closer to each other. Then, the creation of a government of national unity, which included the participation of third parties, and the installation of Liberal deputies in all ministries contributed to normalize Honduran politics, but also reduced the space for ideological and policy differences to emerge. As an editorial commented on the first anniversary of the *golpe*, the country had successfully escaped authoritarianism, but politicians across parties had different versions and opinions of the facts of the previous year.[285]

Collaboration among different parties had no precedents in the Honduran context, and already started to unravel in the second year of the Lobo administration. Consequently, of the 5 articles dealing with polarization in the second sample-year, 4 were positively coded, indicating more differentiation. By January 2011, the relationship between the two traditional parties had clearly deteriorated, with the *Liberales* praising the handling of Honduras' return into the international community, but attacking the government on every other issue. In particular, Lobo's approach to security reforms was considered too soft and his government's health budget cuts unacceptable.[286]

In the same period, Zelaya spoke from his Dominican exile to attack the current administration. The former president saw the new majority a representative of international conservatism, against the preservation of democracy in the country and determined to crash all internal opposition.[287] Zelaya's return into the country brought questions of whether he would be allowed to take on a political role into the discussion.[288] In the summer, collaboration within cabinet ministry staff from the *Liberal* party was clearly unraveling, as the *Partido Nacional* reclaimed its space and wanted Lobo to abandon his concertation policies.[289] Here, the hard stance taken by the party of government against their own president contributed to differentiate the party system. The President personally

283 "Elvin a Pepe: "Cuente con nosotros"" *La Prensa*, 1 Dec. 2009
284 "Romper con la Alba propone Gobierno" *La Prensa*, 17 Dec. 2009
285 "Un año de superar pruebas y buscar paz y apoyo" *La Prensa*, 29 Jun. 2010
286 "Liberales critican excesiva concentración del poder" *La Prensa*, 28 Jan. 2011
287 "Zelaya: Lobo intenta destruir a opositores" *La Prensa*, 8 Feb. 2011
288 "Zelaya regresa con un futuro político incierto a una Honduras aún dividida" *La Prensa*, 27 May 2011
289 "Piden "cabezas" de ministros liberales" *La Prensa*, 1 Aug. 2011

met with the non-*Nacional* deputies, rejecting his party's stance, and declared himself tired of political sectarianism.[290]

Then in 2012 the number of articles capturing different positions within the party system in matters of policy and ideology started to grow. Fourteen out of the fifteen articles in the sample dealing with the differentiation of the party system were positive. In addition, even if the media did not explicitly portray it as an ideological conflict, in February the return of lands to the Bajo Aguán *campesinos* certainly carved some space between the government and the opposition. This widening was true between *Liberales* and *Nacionales*, but also regarded the creation of new political parties with specific agendas, covering themes that had been left priorly unaddressed. Popular sports announcer Salvador Nasralla started releasing statements in the spring to pave the way for his political candidature, rooted in a simple but powerful proposals: that he would make laws be respected by people who never did. In March 2012 the *Tribunal Supremo Electoral* (*TSE*) registered his party under the name of *Partido Anti Corrupción* (*PAC*).[291] Given the monopolistic traits of the two-party system, and its links the power of the local and national elites, Nasralla's message had a revolutionary element to it.[292] Not coincidentally, his entry into politics came at a moment when the Lobo government was also trying to pass an anti-tax-evasion law, and faced strong *Liberal* opposition in Congress.[293] Then in the summer, the launch of Zelaya's party, *Libertad y Refundacion* (*LibRe*), which fused the left wing of the *Liberales* and the Resistencia movement, completed the transformation. The former president enthusiastically proclaimed the end of bipartidism in the country, claiming that the party was ready to contest its internal elections at a par with the two main parties.[294]

In September 2012 one could witness the change in political discourse when Nasralla first, accused the political class of neglecting the country's poor, then refused to excuse himself when his new colleagues reacted with outrage.[295] Both him and Zelaya's unapologetic style allowed for the open discussion of themes that the country's elites wanted to keep outside of political discourse. With the presidential, congressional and municipal primaries approaching rapidly, all four parties started sharpening their platforms. For example, *Liberal* politician Mauricio Villeda distanced himself from the government,

[290] "Estoy está aquí de tanto sectarismo político: Lobo" *La Prensa*, 5 Aug. 2011
[291] "Salvador Nasralla hará campaña más divertida" *La Prensa*, 12 Mar. 2012
[292] "Nasralla: "Aplicaré las leyes a quienes no se han aplicado"" *La Prensa*, 15 Mar. 2012
[293] "Sorteando oposición de liberales aprueban Ley Antievasión" *La Prensa*, 20 Jun. 2012
[294] "Expresidente Zelaya: 70% de LibRe es Liberal" *La Prensa*, 1 Aug. 2012
[295] "Nasralla: "No me disculpo con nadie"" *La Prensa*, 11 Sep. 2012

by claiming that he would not raise taxes and criticized the administration's excessive spending plans. Given the centrist trajectory that Lobo's *Nacional* government had taken, the *Liberal* party was solidly placed to its right in ideological and economic terms.[296] In addition, the division, predating the *golpe*, within and between parties concerning the use of direct democracy informed the discussion of the reform of laws concerning plebiscites and referendums.[297] It was ultimately passed after the *golpe técnico* which sidelined the *Corte Suprema de Justicia* (*CSJ*).

With the election approaching, the 2013 sample had 45 articles coded for polarization, 12 of which regarded ideological matters. All of the latter received a positive coding, which shows general agreement regarding the creation of real alternatives within the party system. The campaign itself had all parties coming up with a profusion of proposals and policies, and saw an extravagant amount of spending for a country in deep economic crisis like Honduras. It looked as if the most competitive and varied election in the history of the country also had to be the most expensive.[298] The contrast with the 2009 campaign, its minor tone and situation of absolute uncertainty could not have been more stark. The country had turned a corner, and its party system had been transformed in a seemingly irreversible direction.

The one easy point of convergence between all parties and candidates was the security emergency, which would necessarily have to be dealt with by the next President.[299] The failure of the Lobo administration was largely the consequence of the lack of control that he had over the police and security apparatus. Yet, while all opposition candidates blamed the government, there was variation over how they proposed to tackle the issue, different policy positions depended on how violence was discursively linked with other issues. As mentioned in chapter 2, Hernandez proposed to create a special corps of military police, while Nasralla seemed convinced that unemployment was the root cause, and that any kind of cleaning of the public administration should have generated jobs.[300] The government was also accused of creeping authoritarianism for its violation of the separation of powers, a claim which was more substantiated from *PAC* and *LibRe*, than from the *Liberal* party, given that the army supported Villeda and his platform included a proposal to allow the

[296] "Mauricio Villeda: "No impondré más impuestos"" *La Prensa*, 13 Nov. 2012
[297] "Liberales no conocen proyecto del plebiscito" *La Prensa*, 10 Dec. 2012
[298] "Más de L1,800 millones es el costo de todo el proceso electoral en Honduras" *La Prensa*, 30 Sep. 2012
[299] "Seguridad, la gran propuesta de los presidenciables en Honduras" *La Prensa*, 22 Nov. 2013
[300] ""La primera acción para prevenir la violencia es generar empleo"" *La Prensa*, 19 Aug. 2013

military to vote.[301] Nevertheless the *Liberal* candidate claimed to be more democratic than the actual majority on many occasions.[302]

In sum, the call to vote made by all media sources in November 2013 was supported not only by a growth in the credibility of Honduran institutions since 2009, but also by the opposition's growth and by the differentiation of the Honduran party system as a whole. In his editorial published three days before the election, Jorge Espinoza noted: "*the options are there and are very different; each representing different principles, values, capabilities and trajectories. In general terms once can say that it is an advance for our political system.*"[303][304] The electorate seemed to agree, and went on to deliver the largest surge in voting in the country's history.

5.2.3 – Polarization of the Costa Rican party system from 1994 to 1998

Falling competition in a restrictive electoral revolution

TABLE **5.4** - COSTA RICA, 1994-1998
EVENTS affecting political COMPETITION through party system POLARIZATION

period	date	focusing event	sample?	sign	intensity
NA	*[September 1994]*	contentious BAC closure	yes	*positive*	NA
NA	*[October 1994]*	agreement over SAP	yes	*negative*	NA
NA	*[May 1995]*	pact PLN-PUSC	yes	*negative*	NA
NA	*[September 1996]*	poll shows need for third party	yes	*negative*	NA
NA	*[June 1997]*	candidates debate	yes	*positive*	NA
NA	*[January 1998]*	moderate campaigns	yes	*negative*	NA

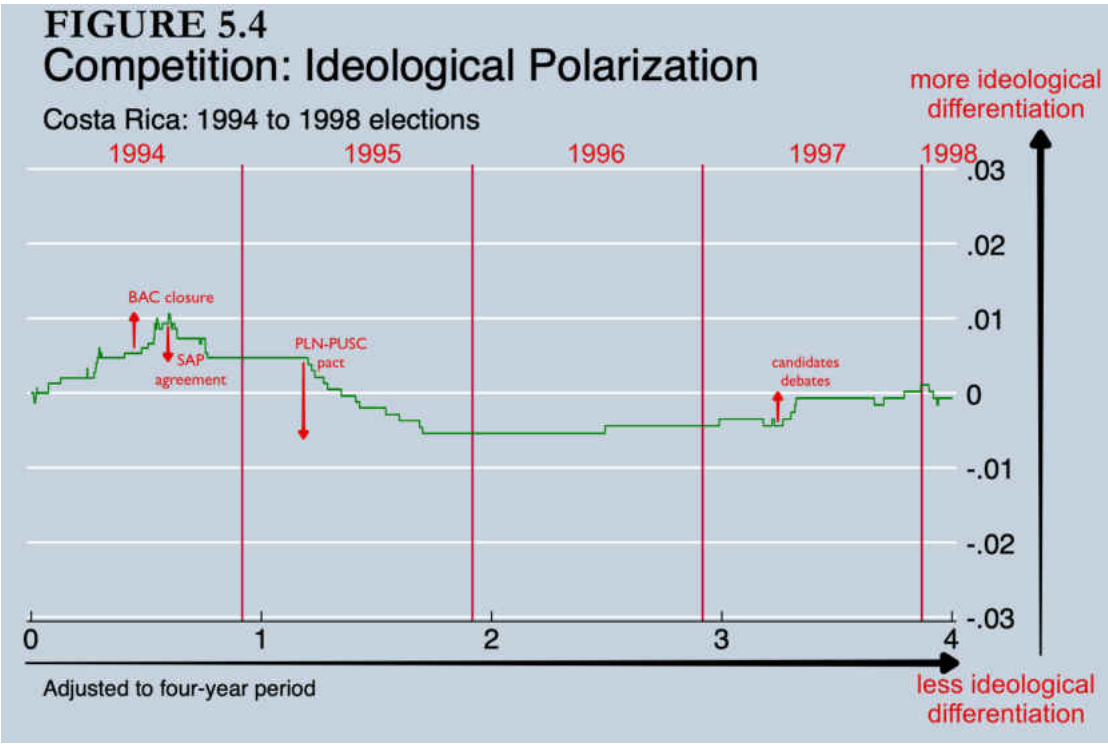
MAIN SOURCES: *La Nación*, *Revista de Ciencias Sociales*

Examining the fall of polarization in the Costa Rican party system entails giving a good look at the internal transformation of *Liberación*, which had started before the 1994 election, and then analyzing the consequences of the pact that the majority signed with *PUSC* in May 1995. While a quantitative evaluation of polarization relying on sample data shows no clear evidence of a decrease in polarization, this largely depends upon how the local discourse worked. Given that there had never before been a bipartisan alliance in the country, politicians from both sides felt very uneasy about it and were very paranoid about

[301] "Mauricio Villeda está a favor que militares voten" *La Prensa*, 6 Jul. 2013
[302] ""Combatiremos el esquema totalitario": Mauricio Villeda" *La Prensa*, 18 Mar. 2013
[303] Spanish: "Las opciones están allí y son muy diversas; representando cada una principios, valores, capacitades y trayectorias diferentes. En términos generales podría decirse que es un avance para nuestro sistema político."
[304] Espinoza, Jorge "Todos a votar" *La Prensa*, 21 Nov. 2013

being tricked by the other party. Consequently, the political discourse captures the continuous accusations and disagreements between *PLN* and *PUSC*, alongside those within each party that were portrayed in chapters 3 and 4.

The following figure shows the early appearance of an increasing trend, then a more gradual, long-term negative trend, but the size of the effect is incredibly small in both instances. The overall impact is neutral, quite literally, given that the number of articles with positive and negative coding is equal at the end of the whole period. Given that for the Costa Rican case the sample includes all articles published by *La Nación* between 1994 and 1998 with political content, the absence of significant effects is no accident. It has to do with how mainstream Costa Rican political discourse had become less and less ideologically changed starting in the early 1980s. Especially after the election of Figueres, whatever was left of the old ideological legacy of *PLN* became profoundly marginalized within the party. This is especially clear for 1996, where almost no articles were coded for polarization at all, before seeing some other slight positive variations in 1997.



The initial positive wave of political differentiation within the party system was due to a relatively good performance of two smaller formations – *Fuerza Democratica* (*FD*) and *Partido Agrario Nacional* (*PAN*) – which seemed to bring some new themes into the country's old bipartidism. Also, following what had been a very animated campaign, in the spring of 1994 there seemed to be some genuine antagonism between *PLN* and *PUSC*,

with the new President denouncing the actions of the previous government.[305] In particular Figueres bitterly announced that public government deficit had tripled under the Calderon presidency and that the coffers of the state were almost empty, something which the outgoing cabinet rejected. in August, the return to the country of the former president after a long vacation became the occasion to promise real, strong opposition to government policy over matters of international loans and public banking.[306]

Then unfortunately, the proven involvement of both main parties in the *Banco Anglo* fund mismanagement scandal (explored more at length in Chapter 6), had the effect of making them look similar to each other, in their incompetence and corruption. Disagreement regarding the bank's fate in September, which *PUSC* initially rejected, quickly faded once it was clear that public opinion was in favor of closure. Already two days after the bank's termination, on September 17, the two parties were taking joint decisions over the management of its future.[307] During the fall season, the two parties started to collaborate more, inside and outside of parliament, in order to finalize a third *Structural Adjustment Plan* (PAE III).[308] In late October the media reported that *PUSC* gave its green light to the approval of the plan, but it was actually *PLN* that had decided to go through with the project set up by the Calderón government and was betraying its electorate. Meanwhile, it had also become clear that in the long run the impact of the minor parties was going to be minimal, after having generated some early enthusiasm. In particular, *Fuerza Democratica* fizzled out fast, splitting over internal disputes between its only 2 members of parliament, an impressive negative accomplishment which shrank their capability to provide a counterpoint to the two main parties.

At the center of this analysis lies the pact signed between the two parties in late April 1995. The pact was disastrous for political competition because it damaged both parties, as seen in the previous two chapters, and because it erased any semblance of ideological differentiation left. Already on April 4, *PLN* had announced a process of internal re-evaluation of its charter to make it more open to privatization and economic activity.[309] Later that week, the leadership offered to the media a more explicit formulation of the consequences of this opening, including partnerships between the government and private enterprise, breaking of the national monopoly on alcoholic beverages and

[305] Espinoza, Roland "Discurso de Figueres crispa el PUSC" *La Nación*, 10 May 1994.
[306] Cortes, Carlos "Vientos de guerra" *La Nación*, 12 Aug. 1994
[307] "PLN y PUSC reducen diferencias" *La Nación*, 17 Sep. 1994.
[308] Mendez, William and Álvarez, Arturo "Llegó el consenso en la Asamblea" *La Nación*, 13 Sep. 1994.
[309] Álvarez Ulate, Arturo "PLN ensaya nuevo rumbo" *La Nación*, 4 Apr. 1995.

expanded public loans to private companies.[310] The historical compromise signed with *PUSC* at the end of the month was a logical consequence: the two parties were on similar positions, and had decided to collaborate for the goal of economic development.[311] During 1995 not a single article discussing ideological differentiation saw it in positive terms, 12 out of 12 saw it as absent, negative. A lucid commentary published in mid-May saw the pact as showing most baffling kind of politics: the most virulent, extreme campaign that the country remembered, had led to an alliance. The two parties that only 12 months prior were accusing each other of incarnating *"the neoliberal ogre*" and "*foul-mouthed and arbitrary militarism*" were governing the country together.[312] The ideological space within the country was arguably shrinking under international pressure for public sector reform, and there was little room for maneuvering beyond boasting during electoral campaigns.[313]

At first, public opinion seemed uncertain about the pact, then it adopted an attitude of disapproval. A few early signals were effective indications of the fate of this alliance. Both parties seemed uneasy about it from the start, and nervous about the reactions of their base. On either side, the leadership seemed to have taken the responsibility to sign the agreement, and the whole process lacked internal democracy. Although it was certainly noble of *PUSC* not to let the *PLN* agenda fail alone, co-government did not make it any easier to pass policy. The parties signed a pact, but kept fighting on every little thing like they had done until then. At many points either party threatened to break the agreement, something which was visible already in late June 1995, when *PUSC* proclaimed it would go support taxation plans only in exchange for economic reform.[314] In many ways, the alliance mostly had negative consequences, as the supposed positive side never came through.

Then in 1996, the fight between the two parties for the election of the Comptroller was merely a struggle for power, but did not reflect any sort of real disagreement. In fact, an opinion poll that came out in late September showed that Costa Ricans knew perfectly well that they needed new political options. A large majority would have been in favor of collaborating to found a new party (71%). All source of variation within the party system was limited to dissenting voices within the two main parties, something that had little impact on the policy agenda. Organizational and financial burdens to the creation of new parties, and the incredible advantage that the two main formations had, had led to a

310 Álvarez Ulate, Arturo "PLN cambia ropajes" *La Nación*, 9 Apr. 1995.
311 Figueres Olsen, Josè Maria and Calderon F., Rafael Angel "Al pueblo de Costa Rica:" *La Nación*, 29 Apr. 1995.
312 Ulibarri, Eduardo "La clave mayor del acuerdo" *La Nación*, 14 May 1995.
313 Ulibarri, Eduardo "Ideologías y partidos" *La Nación*, 29 Sep. 1995.
314 Álvarez Ulate, Arturo "Oposición amenaza con romper pacto" *La Nación*, 30 Jun. 1995

situation of complete stalemate, which shrank ideological and policy horizons at the national level.[315] In November 1996, the discussion around the budget for 1997 was exemplary of this phenomenon. The disagreement did not regard the spending plans that were mostly decided together, but the extent of debt finance that the government should be planning, higher for *PLN*, lower for *PUSC*.[316] The reasons why the electorate should vote for one party over the other had been reduced to a minimum.

Then during the last year both parties attempted to carve distance from their supposed rival, but their attempts were not considered believable, although they did raise the coefficient calculated through the coding. The presence of Corrales as *PLN* presidential candidate certainly constituted a pull to the left. Yet, the years of co-government had damaged the ideological reputation of what used to be the center-left pole. In February 1997, one of the few original policy proposals came from *PLN* representative Ottón Solís, who argued that the reconfiguration of the public sector and the restructuring of public debt should be treated as two separate matters.[317] It is no coincidence that three years later Solís would create a new party, taking with him a number of dissatisfied *PLN* members, but in 1997 he had not yet accumulated the necessary political capital.

Even if in 1997 and early 1998 the articles that dealt with ideological differentiation were all positive, their number was extremely limited (10 out of 1883) and so was their impact on the electorate. Some were relative to the proposals of minor parties that unsuccessfully attempted to break the two-party monopoly, such as the *Movimiento Libertario* (*Libertarian Movement*) that denounced the pact from a more extreme free-market position. The new party argued that privatizations had a limited approach, but opening public monopolies to private competition was the right solution for Costa Rica.[318] A few days later, the perfect occasion for breaking the peace came at a public debate between the two presidential candidates of *PLN* and *PUSC* exchanged heavy accusations. Corrales (*PLN*) accused Rodríguez (*PUSC*) of being a liar, and mocked his involvement with Mexican businessman Carlos Hank. Rodriguez responded by calling his opponent a hypocrite in reference to his positions around participatory democracy.[319] As noted by a subsequent editorial, candidates seemed scarcely interested in debating real ideological or policy-based issues, and the quality of political debate had deteriorated in comparison to prior years.[320]

[315] Herrera, Mauricio "Realidades frenan nuevas opciones" *La Nación*, 30 Sep. 1996.
[316] Matute, Roland "Primer debate a presupuesto" *La Nación*, 28 Nov. 1996.
[317] Muñoz, Pedro M. "A propósito de dogmas" *La Nación*, 1 Feb. 1997
[318] Guevara M., José David "Movimiento Libertario se acerca de impresarios" *La Nación*, 6 Jun. 1997
[319] Mendez Garita, William "Zarpazos entre candidatos" *La Nación*, 14 Jun. 1997
[320] Mayorga, Armando "Anuncios de guerra" *La Nación*, *La Nación*, 16 Jun. 1997

The *Tribunal Supremo Electoral* (TSE) made an attempt to moderate the tones of the campaign by having the parties sign a pledge to a respectful, rational and non-violent campaign, was a complete failure. The two parties that had been making policy together since 1995 seemed eager to finally get at each other's throat.[321] At the end of the year, vice-presidential candidate Joyce Zurcher offered a lonely commentary concerning the ideological cleavage between the two parties. She argued that *PLN* embodied values of solidarism and sustainable human development that went beyond the neoliberal obsession with economic growth of its rivals.[322] Arguably, it was too little, too late after her party had done everything to eliminate the difference with its main competitor and was by then trailing in the polls for 1998. No final presidential debate was scheduled because Rodríguez, wisely, did not want to put his large advantage at risk.[323] In addition, minoritarian parties did not seem to have swayed the electorate at all and during the legislature any voice distancing itself from the status quo had been drowned out.[324] The differentiation within Costa Rican politics for the 1998 was minimal, and nothing intervened to reverse the trend at the last minute. The electorate reacted by deserting the polls at an unprecedented rate for a country with such established democratic traditions.

5.2.4 – Polarization in the British party system from 1997 to 2001.

Falling competition in a restrictive electoral revolution

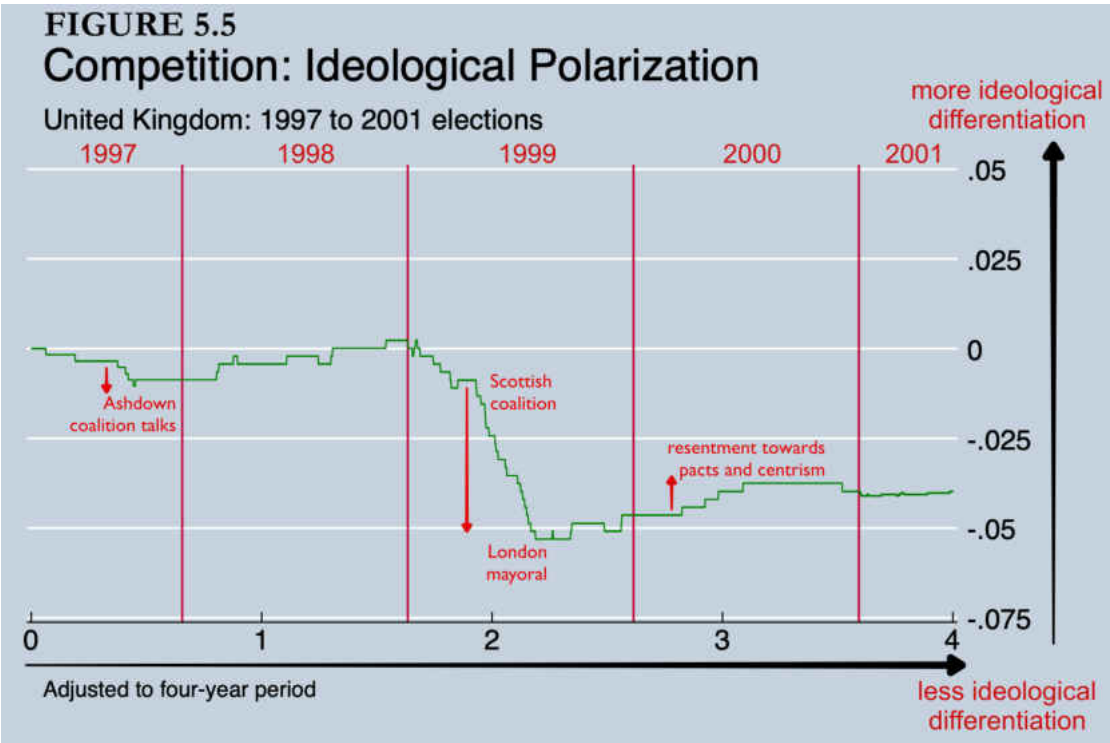
TABLE **5.5** - GREAT BRITAIN, 1997-2001
EVENTS affecting political COMPETITION through party system POLARIZATION

period	date	focusing event	sample?	sign	intensity
NA	*[September 1997]*	Ashdown talks	yes	*negative*	NA
NA	*[September 1997]*	Labour's Partnership in Power	yes	*negative*	NA
NA	*[March 1998]*	Scottish battleground	yes	*positive*	NA
NA	*[April 1999]*	Tory anti-market speeches	yes	*negative*	NA
NA	*[May 1999]*	Scottish coalition	yes	*negative*	NA
NA	*[August 1999]*	Kennedy LibDem leader	yes	*positive*	NA
NA	*[January 2001]*	moderate campaigns	yes	*negative*	NA

MAIN SOURCES: *Daily Mail, King (2001), Geddes and Tonge (2001), Butler and Kavanagh (2001)*

321 Matute, Roland "Fracasa intento de pacto político" *La Nación*, 13 Sep. 1997
322 Zürcher Blen, Joyce "La diferencia" *La Nación*, 29 Dec. 1997
323 Herrera, Berlioth "Difícil acuerdo para debate" *La Nación*, 16 Jan. 1998.
324 Mayorga, Armando "Minoritarios no convincen" *La Nación*, 19 Jan. 1998.

During Tony Blair's first term in office, the polarization of the British party system shrank significantly. Looking separately at the three main parties allows for a comprehensive evaluation. The *Conservatives* were unsure over the best course of action, considered a more centrist policy agenda and constantly fought internally over European issues. William Hague's leadership, precarious at many stages, was reinforced by the European election, and allowed him to try out virulent right-wing discourse as the 2001 election approached. The *Labour* party cemented its new centrist vocation, especially in England, where the new leadership was strongest. Internal tensions with the internal left were felt in the new local government elections, especially with the defiant rise of Ken Livingstone as the first elected mayor of London in 2000. Meanwhile, in Scotland and Wales, their impact of the *Labour* left was mitigated by the necessity of creating coalition governments with the *Liberal Democrats*. As all three parties represented different versions of ideological centrism, with few policy proposals that could be considered radical on either side, significant space was unoccupied both to the left and to the right. What is then remarkable in comparison to the legislatures that had preceded Blair's first turn was a drastic reduction of the amount ideological discourse present in mainstream media.



The sample captures a first clear signal of falling partisan differentiation in September 1997, when *Liberal Democrats* leader Paddy Ashdown spoke with enthusiasm about the future possibility of a coalition government with *Labour*.[325] He also added that

[325] "We can govern with Labour, says Ashdown." *Daily Mail*, 11 Sep. 1997.

there would have already have been one if Blair had not won with such a wide margin in 1997, while trying to persuade his party base, which did not seem thrilled at the perspective. Ashdown's objective was constitutional reform and the adoption of a proportional representation system, something which would enormously strengthen a party which obtained 17% of votes but only 40 seats in the Commons (7%). Coincidentally, the *Liberal Democrats* were also considering abandoning its policy proposal of a 1% tax raise to fund education, in alignment with the majority's platform.[326] That same month, *Labour* also decided to speed up its internal reconfiguration through when the *Partnership in Power* reforms were passed with 76% approval.[327] These internal reforms empowered a *National Policy Forum* open to all members. This allowed young centrists to dictate agendas, to at the detriment of the yearly party conference where the party's trajectory was usually elaborated, thus reducing the power of the unions and the left wing.

A possible source of differentiation within the party system lied in the devolution agenda that represented the only ambitious reform that *Labour* had pushed in 1997. The hostilities for the election to the Scottish parliament started in March 1998, when Scottish *Labour* leader Donald Dewar declared that the collaboration with *SNP* politicians on the devolution agenda was merely out of tactical necessity to win the 1997 election.[328] He further denounced the local political formation as a "*single plank party*" with no real policy agenda. In so doing, it actually brought *Labour* closer to the *Tories*, which had always been firmly against any concession to Wales or Scotland that could lead to the breakup of the United Kingdom. In May, with polls signaling a possible head to head between *SNP* and the majority, nationalist politicians recognized the need to downplay independence prospects and focus on other issues.[329] Similarly worried about this electoral prediction, in a TV interview Dewar let slip that he would consider alliances with other unionist parties to keep the nationalists out of government, something unthinkable a year before.[330]

The Scottish issue took the front pages of media and also monopolized a large portion of the conversations and exchanges between political parties. Surprisingly in May 1998, a pact on Scotland between Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown was signed, which might be prelude to a coalition government, if the numbers were insufficient for a single-party government[331]. Then at the national *Labour* conference in October, Donald Dewar

[326] "Tax U Turn That Angered the Party" *Daily Mail*, 23 Sep. 1997.
[327] "Left swept aside in fight to control policy making." *Daily Mail*, 30 Sep. 1997.
[328] "LINK WITH SNP WAS 'A TACTICAL NECESSITY'." *Daily Mail*, 9 Mar. 1998
[329] MacDonell, Hamish "SNP to Play Down Home Rule in New Power Game" *Daily Mail*, 6 May 1998.
[330] MacDonell, Hamish "Dewar Would Accept Pact to Thwart SNP" *Daily Mail*, 8 May 1998.
[331] "Lib-Lab pact aims to halt the SNP surge." *Daily Mail*, 12 Jun. 1998.

launched a fierce attack on the *SNP*, defining the nationalists irresponsible for promoting independence plans that would be incredibly costly and could only be sustained through massive tax increases.[332] In a situation of uncertainty, the *Liberal Democrats* walked away on the previously stipulated agreements at the end of the year, realizing that they could be kingmakers, and leaving the door open to a possible agreement with the nationalists.[333]

April and May 1999 stand out as being responsible for the largest fall in ideological differentiation in the media sample. Interestingly, these months saw two important events take place in rapid sequence. First came the William Hague's decision to adopt a softer *Conservative* stance towards welfare state policies, immediately followed by the creation of a Scottish coalition government between *Labour* and the *Liberal Democrats*. Both had a strong impact upon British public opinion because they attacked deep-rooted beliefs about the party system: that the *Tories* were against spending for public service provision and that coalition governments were something that belonged in other countries, but not in the United Kingdom. In combination, they conveyed a message of convergence among political parties, pointing to the existence of a shared consensus and to the fact that no matter who was in government, they would have roughly taken the same path.

The first of the two events challenged the status quo and reduced the polarization of the party system by portraying political parties whose ideology had suddenly become flexible. Coming in late April 1999, the *Tory* leader's announcement that the party was keeping an open mind towards public sector solutions to the provision of services was received with scorn and contempt within the party.[334] Hague, who was on the road, campaigning for the Scottish election, defended himself by claiming that his party firmly believed in the provision of public services. The same day, his deputy Peter Lilley delivered a public speech admitting to the existence of limits to the free market.[335] These announcements came right at the moment when the party was celebrating the achievements of Margaret Thatcher, and sounded as if the party did not need her wisdom anymore. Ironically, the media were also reporting in the same days that Tony Blair had been on the phone several times with the *Iron Lady* to obtain some advice regarding the NATO intervention in the Balkans.[336] Was *Labour* moving slightly to the right of the *Tories*?

[332] MacDonell, Hamish "Dewar's Warning over an SNP Tax Bombshell" *Daily Mail*, 2 Oct. 1998.
[333] MacDonell, Hamish "Lib-Dems Step Back from Pact with New Labour" *Daily Mail*, 8 Dec. 1998.
[334] Hughes, David "Hague Battle over Welfare State U-Turn" *Daily Mail*, 24 Apr. 1999.
[335] Have the Tories Lost Their Way? *Daily Mail*, 24 Apr. 1999.
[336] Glover, Stephen "The Madness of Disowning Maggie" *Daily* Mail. 27 Apr. 1999.

Then in May, Britons witnessed the creation of the first ever coalition government, after the election to the Scottish Parliament, scheduled on May 4, 1999. The combination of a good performance of the *SNP* Scottish Nationalists (28%) with a mixed electoral system with a strong proportional component, meant that *Labour* came in first, but was 9 seats short of absolute majority. To avoid a minority government, the winners signed an official government alliance with *Liberal Democrats* which had obtained 17 seats. Already a week before the election, the alliance embarrassed *Labour* politicians, and an editorial accused the parties to be stealing democracy away from the Scottish electorate.[337] As the results of the election concretized, Scottish Labour leader Donald Dewar had to sit with his counterpart Jim Wallace to discuss *Liberal Democrat* ministers' participation in his cabinet, and their campaign promise not to raise college tuition in Scotland.[338] This agreement reduced ideological and policy differentiation, as it put a damper on any prospect of Scottish independence, and imposed a convergence between two of the main parties. Oddly, the *Liberal Democrats* constituted an ideological pull to the left. The pact was signed on May 14, with Wallace officially becoming Dewar's deputy.[339]

The election of Charles Kennedy as the *Liberal Democrats'* national leader in August 1999, replacing Paddy Ashdown, did not simplify things. In his inaugural speech he attacked Blair's policy agenda, which ignored the poor and the needy, and signaled an end to the policies of cooperation with *Labour* of his predecessor.[340] Resentment towards the Scottish deal grew at the end of the year, as Dewar was accused to be taking orders from Chancellor Gordon Brown and avoided important conversations with his coalition partners.[341] The coalition arrangement became a source of quarrels and debates within and between the two parties, but actually held for the whole legislature. Then in May 2000, the embarrassment of the London election, where leftist Ken Livingstone lost the *Labour* primaries, then won the mayoralty with a large margin over the official candidate, showed that the party had already carved a large ideological distance with its socialist past.

When the campaign for the 2001 general election started, the ideological and policy positioning of the three main parties was largely overlapping. On January 18, Tony Blair's refusal to hold a televised debate with the leaders of the other political formations certainly

[337] McDonnell, Hamish and Clark, William "Was Holyrood Hijacked Long before the Election?" *Daily Mail*,28 Apr. 1999.
[338] Eastham, Paul "Dewar Needs Lib-Lab Pact to Lead the Scots" *Daily* Mail, 8 May 1999.
[339] "Coalition deal for Scots." *Daily Mail*, 15 May 1999.
[340] Heffer, Simon "Kennedy Shows the Importance of Not Being Earnest" *Daily Mail*, 10 Aug 1999.
[341] Smith, Ian "Lib-Lab Coalition under Strain as Resentment Grows" *Daily Mail*, 3 Dec. 1999.

did not help the electorate differentiate between them.[342] It seemed as if the majority was not taking any risks, political, ideological or otherwise. The following day William Hague also decided to choose the safe option by leaving Michael Portillo and Francis Maude, two moderates within the party, in charge of leadership as he planned his tour of the country for the campaign. He sidelined shadow Home Secretary Ann Widdecombe, whose inflammatory views were less compromising, by sending her to campaign in the countryside.[343]

A few days later, Hague and Portillo jointly announced that the *Tories* were matching *Labour*'s campaign pledges towards health and education spending. The policy differentiation between the two parties was at an all-time low.[344] The only traces of difference regarded the European single-currency issue, where *Labour* seemed more eager to leave the pound behind[345], while the *Tories* were very divided on the issue, although the official line held that the party was against it. Hague tried to move his party to the right in March when he delivered his now infamous "Britain as a foreign land" speech where he warned about the risks of immigration.[346] His attempt was extremely unsuccessful as his words were condemned from inside and outside his party, although sadly there would be plenty of space for that type of rhetoric in years to come. Within the *Labour* party, John Prescott's campaign incident – he punched a protester that smashed an egg on his head – was seen as symbolic of the frustration of the left, sidelined by the current leadership.[347]

5.3 – Polarization And Differentiation: The Role Of Ideology

This chapter cast a wider look on the four party systems, considering them as a whole, and without the separation between the majority and the opposition. It followed the transformation in the dialectics which formed within and between their component parties in terms of polarization and differentiation. Ideology overall played an important role, and did not seem to need much sophistication to have an effect on national political discourse. Instead, it operated at a very basic level. In other words, it does not seem

[342] "Blair says No to TV showdown." *Daily Mail*, 18 Jan. 2001
[343] Hughes, David "Widdecombe Banished for Election Campaign" *Daily Mail*, 19 Jan. 2001
[344] Anderson, Bruce "Time for the BIG Ideas, Mr Hague; COMMENTARY" *Daily Mail*, 24 Jan. 2001
[345] Clarke, Martin "IT'S EITHER LABOUR OR THE POUND.(Column)" *Daily Mail*, 10 Feb. 2001
[346] Heffer, Simon "Sleaze That Still Taints Our Rulers" *Daily Mail*, 10 Mar. 2001.
[347] Anderson, Bruce "Why Two Jags Is Heading for the Scrapyard" *Daily Mail*, 18 May 2001.

necessary for parties to have elaborate agendas, but just to build a perception in the electorate that they operate from different perspectives, with different visions of politics and society. This works by separating the choice set offered to voters for the positive cases of electoral revolution, or in making parties overlap and appear all parts of the same whole in the negative one.

The positive cases of France and Honduras, albeit separated in space and time, appear strikingly similar in ideological terms. In both, the conservative side was associated with more authoritarian politics, but with Presidents (De Gaulle and Lobo) that strived to portray themselves as centrists. This allowed the opposition to call their bluff, presenting a united front in the French case, and an array of alternatives in the Honduran instance. The importance to participation of an ideological left strengthening during these periods of economic transformation and crisis looks uncontroversial. It was a key aspect behind massively increasing participation, even if those parties lost the election in the end.

The negative case studies offer a stark contrast, because they show how political discourse can be diminished and constrained, made to fit extremely narrow ideological spaces. In this sense, as party politics moves into a post-ideological era in institutionalized democracies, there seems to be a high price to pay in the transition. Most political parties used to be founded upon ideological premises, on a core set of ideas that were held sacred by its members. A loss of values, especially when extended to the whole party system, can trigger negative consequences in terms of disaffiliation. In particular, leaving behind established members in favor of a more catch-all approach targeting the whole electorate is a gamble that might pay in the long run, but that in the short term can result in dramatic losses in participation. The centrist politics of the British *Labour* party and *Liberación* in Costa Rica are two great examples of this phenomenon, but the *Conservatives* and *PUSC* did not have strong ideological positions either.

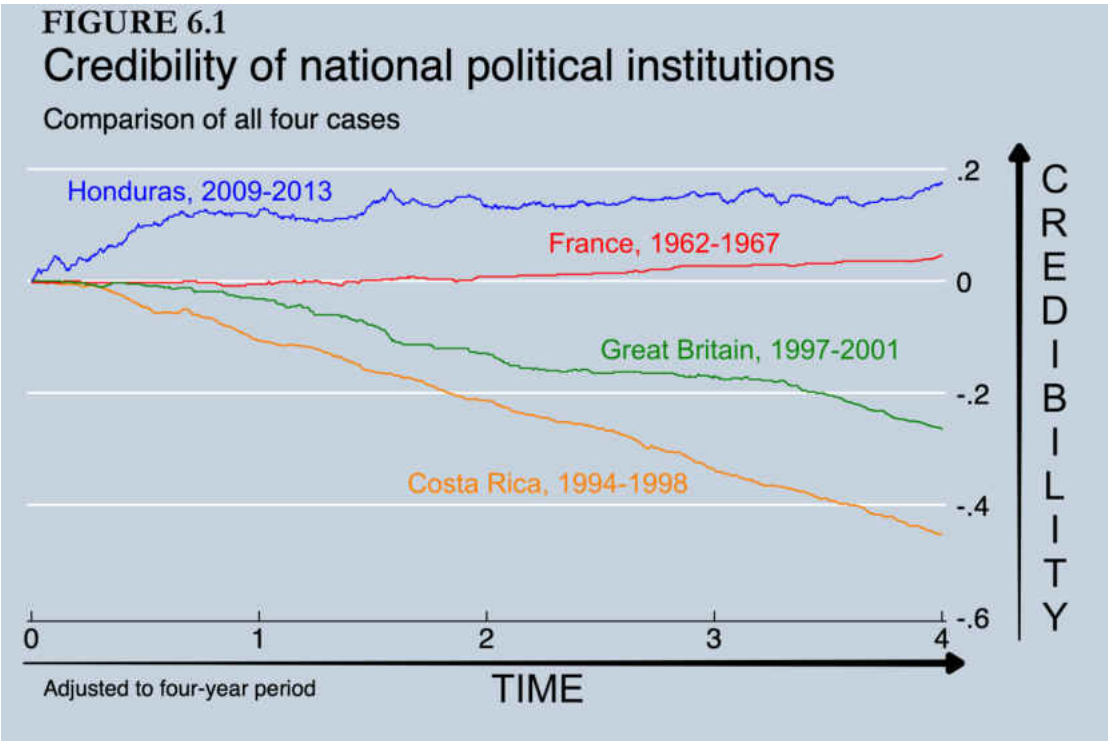
Seen in combination with insight on the majority and the opposition provided in chapters 3 and 4, this final aspect of competition makes the picture significantly more coherent. One can now illustrate how the combination of different elements produced the dramatic final outcome in terms of participation. Expansive electoral revolutions benefited from the joint impact of weaker majorities that were still able to win the following election, in a context of massive opposition growth and increasing party system differentiation. Restrictive electoral revolutions saw weak majorities face weak oppositions, while all parties converged around similar positions, *de facto* erasing the electorate's margins of electoral choice, in spite of the survival of political rivalries.

CHAPTER VI

POLITICAL CREDIBILITY

In this last empirical chapter, the focus shifts to tracing how changes in political credibility led to dramatic changes in voter turnout. In Chapter II, only one of seven credibility mechanisms showed a coherent trend across the four case studies, referring to the opinion of national political institutions. In other words, expansive electoral revolutions were preceded by periods of increased institutional legitimacy or successful reform, while restrictive electoral revolutions followed the emergence of corruption, a fall in institutional legitimacy and loss of trust in the state. Out of the four empirical chapters this is the one where the discursive component is most prominent, where the emergence of a discourse of loss of trust, or increased trust in institutions constitutes the evidence. In different cases, this can be phrased in different ways by the media, including a full rejection of politics and voting, but was also supported by opinion polling regarding the trust in institutions or in democracy.

FIGURE 6.1



How this played out in practice can be seen through a brief overview of the cases, beginning from the two restrictive electoral revolutions. In Costa Rica, a series of corruption scandals regarding, among other things, mismanagement in public finance damaged political credibility between the 1994 and 1998 elections. In particularly, the

discovery of a massive loss of public funds in the *Banco Anglo Costarricense* in June 1994, only three months into the legislature, oriented the discourse in a negative direction that was then maintained. The administration made some attempts to address these issues, but the public considered them woefully insufficient. Beyond this early episode, evidence of public corruption and mismanagement kept surfacing throughout the whole period, and represented the most prominent part of the whole national political discourse. The national institutions seemed poorly designed to create much needed societal change, and presidential re-election would have brought stability. Public protest events emerged at regional level, but they affected credibility only momentarily in the early part of the term.

Similarly, in the United Kingdom, between 1997 and 2001 a series of corruption scandals affecting the new *Labour* administration hurt institutional credibility. Given how the credibility of the *Conservative* party had eroded during the previous legislature, the continuation of so-called 'sleaze' after alternation in office deeply damaged the credibility of British politics. In parallel, institutional reforms supposed to address a perceived democratic gap were not considered successful, and the unfolding of the project of political devolution was problematic in London, Scotland and Wales. Public protests were remarkably absent, with the exception of the late-2000 fuel protests, which highlighted the grievances of two underrepresented societal constituencies but did not significantly move what by then were consolidated equilibria.

As for the expansive electoral revolutions, Honduras went from the brink of authoritarianism in 2009 to the most open election in its history in 2013. The legitimacy of national institutions had an early recovery through the creation of a government of national unity, sectorial dialogues and the country's readmission into international institutions. Even despite a series of political scandals, credibility was overall positive throughout the whole period because of relentless governmental attempts to clean up a corrupt administration. During these years public protests against the *golpe* were massive and crucial to the survival of democratic institutions and for voter participation. Aware that my claim of a recovery in credibility between 2009 and 2013 in the Honduran context is controversial, the section on Honduras also addresses possible counterarguments.

Last, in France between 1962 and 1967 credibility grew thanks to the newly acquired legitimacy of the institutions of the *Fifth Republic* and a successful two-round Presidential election in 1965. The initial conflicts between the Senate and the Presidency did not last long and a sense of national unity emerged in the second part of the legislature. The presidential candidates of the opposition, Defferre first, then Lecaunet and Mitterrand,

played a crucial role in legitimizing the new institutions in the eyes of their electorate, by speaking in their support. In the wake of the 1967 election, scholars and pundits praised the possible emergence of a credible tri-polar party system with a strong right, a weak center and a united left, and the survival of the new institutions.

TABLE 6.1- CREDIBILITY of POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS
EFFECT, SIGN and INTENSITY in MEDIA SAMPLES

		France (1962-1967)	Honduras (2009-2013)	Costa Rica (1994-1998)	Great Britain (1997-2001)
YEAR 1	*articles in sample* [a]	345	312	1478	532
	coded inst.credibility [b]	8	130	349	32
	% (discourse intensity) [c]	**2.32%**	**41.67%**	**23.61%**	**6.02%**
	coded +/– inst.credibility [d]	3 | 5	84 | 46	97 | 252	8 | 24
	% positive (disc skewness) [e]	**37.50%**	**64.62%**	**27.79%**	**25.00%**
	difference +/– [f]	-2	+38	-155	-16
	% (discourse effect) [g]	**-0.58%**	**12.18%**	**-10.49%**	**-3.01%**
YEAR 2	*articles in sample* [a]	564	289	1179	452
	coded inst.credibility [b]	42	88	184	54
	% (discourse intensity) [c]	**7.45%**	**30.45%**	**15.61%**	**11.95%**
	coded +/– inst.credibility [d]	24 | 18	46 | 42	28 | 156	5 | 49
	% positive (disc skewness) [e]	**57.14%**	**52.27%**	**15.22%**	**9.26%**
	difference +/– [f]	+6	+4	-128	-44
	% (discourse effect) [g]	**1.06%**	**1.38%**	**-10.86%**	**-9.73%**
YEAR 3	*articles in sample* [a]	472	420	1020	451
	coded inst.credibility [b]	11	124	212	38
	% (discourse intensity) [c]	**2.33%**	**29.52%**	**20.78%**	**8.43%**
	coded +/– inst.credibility [d]	10 | 1	67 | 57	43 | 169	10 | 28
	% positive (disc skewness) [e]	**90.91%**	**54.03%**	**20.28%**	**26.32%**
	difference +/– [f]	+9	+10	-126	-18
	% (discourse effect) [g]	**1.91%**	**2.38%**	**-12.35%**	**-3.99%**
YEAR 4	*articles in sample* [a]	798	400	1083	1216
	coded inst.credibility [b]	41	133	218	172
	% (discourse intensity) [c]	**5.14%**	**33.25%**	**20.13%**	**14.14%**
	coded +/– inst.credibility [d]	36 | 5	70 | 63	47 | 171	19 | 153
	% positive (disc skewness) [e]	**87.80%**	**52.63%**	**21.56%**	**11.05%**
	difference +/– [f]	+31	+7	-124	-134
	% (discourse effect) [g]	**3.88%**	**1.75%**	**-11.45%**	**-11.02%**
TOTAL	*articles in sample* [a]	2052	1421	4760	2651
	coded inst.credibility [b]	102	475	963	296
	% (discourse intensity) [c]	**4.97%**	**33.43%**	**20.23%**	**11.17%**
	coded +/– inst.credibility [d]	73 | 29	267 | 208	215 | 748	42 | 254
	% positive (disc skewness) [e]	**71.57%**	**56.21%**	**22.33%**	**14.19%**
	difference +/– [f]	+44	+59	-533	-212
	% (discourse effect) [g]	**2.14%**	**4.15%**	**-11.20%**	**-8.00%**

LEGEND **a**: total number of articles for each case study; **b**: articles coded for the one specific mechanism regarding the credibility of national institutions; **c**: b/a ratio, indicating how prominent the mechanism is in the sample; **d**: articles with positive and negative coding of b; **e**: percentage of articles coded positively (when over 50%, positive articles are prevalent, and viceversa under 50%) **f**: difference between the numbers in d, **g**: f/a ratio, prominence of the difference between positive and negative. The color red denotes any value that is negative in some sense (including e below 50%).

Table 6.1 shows the different evolutions of the reputation of national institutions across the cases. The time marker is obtained through data harmonization over an artificial 4-year period (real periods were slightly longer). The number on the y axis is the difference between the number of positively and negatively coded articles on political credibility, divided by the progressive number of articles included in the sample and harmonized over the same four-year period. That is, a total coefficient of -.4 implies a difference between positive and negative coverage of institutions of 10% (0.4/4) of the total number of articles. That is a huge number, indicating extremely prominent, extremely negative discourse. Overall, Table 6.1 is well-suited to represent variations in prominent threads of discourse. For marginal ones that are very skewed in one direction, the variation looks very small. For example, consider two different 4,000-article samples. One has 400 articles coded positively for institutional credibility, and 360 coded negatively. The other has 60 articles coded positively and 20 negatively. Their lines could look fairly similar in the graph, but in the first the discourse on national institutions is very prominent and the positive articles are 52% of the total, while in the second one, the discourse is much less prominent, but it is overwhelmingly positive (75% positive). To account for this possibility, Table 6.2 reports the credibility articles' prominence relative to the total articles in the sample, the coverage's sign, and the size of the positive or negative slant.

Additional considerations come from combining insight from the figure and the table. In Honduras, the positive transformation of credibility started early on, with the first year being the strongest (64% positive), but never reverted during the following three years in all of which the positive coding prevailed. The discourse on institutions was very prominent, at 33% (one article out of three in the sample). In contrast, in France this discourse was not initially prominent, and had a slight negative leaning in the sample, but became overwhelmingly positive in years 3 and 4, even if with a lower intensity than in Honduras. This was partially due to the automatically-generated sample in the French case, where the data is more closely related to the parties. Then in Costa Rica, the credibility-related discourse was also prominent (20% overall, and 22% positive) and remained negative throughout the whole period, with crisis in the second and fourth years. This meant that out of 100 articles, 20 were coded for institutional credibility, and 15 or 16 of those 20 portrayed it negatively. Last, in Britain, the discourse was slightly less prominent than in Costa Rica, but actually even more negative, reaching an incredibly low 11% positive (172 articles) in the fourth year. Only 19 of 172 articles referring to institutional credibility were coded positively.

The quantitative data offered a good initial sketch of credibility changes, but did not explain how discourse changed. One possibility for showing this transformation would be to follow the evolution of opinion polls asking a series of stock questions to a panel of citizens. Once again, though, the defect in that approach is to ignore what made citizens change their opinions over time. Instead, this chapter traces the evolution of credibility through focusing events reported by large-diffusion newspapers. A selection of the most relevant events divided each sample into 40 periods, finding all periods where the difference in coding for the credibility of national institutions was over 10% positive or negative. To complement this event selection, the use of secondary sources captured additional events. Opinion polls complemented the narration when directly reported in the newspaper samples.

TABLE 6.2 : Events that altered institutional CREDIBILITY discourse positively [+] or negatively [-]

France(1962-1967)	*Honduras(2009-2013)*	*Costa Rica(1994-1998)*	*United Kingdom(1997-2001)*
*63.Monnerville respects [+]***	*4/10.int. recognition advance[+]*	*6/94.Banco Anglo scandal [-]*	*11.97.F1 quid pro quo [-]***
*63.Defferre candidature [+]***	*6/10.SICA readmission [+]*	*5/95.country is ungovernable [-]*	*8/98.Campbell anti-democratic [-]*
*12/65.Presid. election [+]***	*12/10.Zelaya/corruption [-]*	*5/95.Millicom scandal [-]*	*11/98.Robinson-Maxwell deal [-]*
3/67. 5th Republic approval [+]	*9/11.new security minister [+]*	*6/95.apathy in polls [-]*	*12/98.Mandelson scandal [-]*
	11/11.police kills Castellanos [-]	*2/96.wiretapping scandal [-]*	*5/99.Scot election confusion [-]*
	1/12.new Security law [+]	*3/96.incompl. electoral reform [-]*	*8/00.school exams fiasco [-]*
	1/13.Const court actions [+]	*5/96.Israel weapon scandal [-]*	*9/00.fuel protests [-]***
	2/13.Tigre Bonilla scandal [-]	*7/97.public exp outrage [-]*	*1/01.private contrib scandal [-]*
	3/13.fight vs Ley Mordaza [+]	*9/97.campaign criticized [-]*	*1/01.Hinduja scandal [-]*
	11/13.transparent elect process [+]	*1/98.late campaign apathy [-]*	*4/01.campaign apathy, sleaze [-]*

LEGEND: all events are formatted as month/year, event, sign. ** indicates that the event is present in the secondary literature, but not in the sample, or it is present but its impact is gradual over some months or confused by other events.

Table 6.2 offers a synthetic view of the most salient events linked to institutional credibility for each case. Most events clearly emerged as relevant from the newspaper sample and were selected whenever the difference between positive and negative coding was larger than 10% for a period. Other events, marked with ** were not present in the sample, or did not produce a strong change within a certain period, but were also included as substantively important. In both Honduras and Costa Rica, the most important events for credibility happened early on, contributing to skew the discourse in a way that looked irreversible. In the other two cases the early periods were similar, showing only a slight negative variation, and things could have still taken a different trajectory, before turning positive for France, and very negative for Britain.

The table shows another important difference between the cases. In France no periods passed the 10% threshold, with only one coming near, a consequence of the discourse's lower intensity. Here the credibility process adjusted gradually, which also

depended by how the computer-selected sample was more focused on the parties. Editorials commenting on institutional legitimacy did come out on *Le Monde* between 1962 and 1967, and a manually-selected sample (like Honduras and Costa Rica) would have included them. The same would have been true if credibility had been more linked to the parties like in Britain. Another important signal that the *METAnalysis* worked in the French case is that, even with few articles on institutions, after 1965 the coverage was overwhelmingly positive. In the other three cases then, there was a wealth of sample material to build the accounts in section 6.2. The Honduran case is the most controversial, as after the first year and half, the events linked to national institutions generated both positive and negative commentary. Yet, institutional responses to scandals, and the positive aggregate coding are evidence of credibility growth, which impacts on participation. The two other cases are more straightforward, as shown by the presence of only negative events in the table. Both Britain and Costa Rica went through an embarrassing series of scandals and incidents involving politicians and state officials, which negatively redirected the institutions' discourse.

6.1 – Different Cases, Different Starting Points

Since events are "sequences of occurrences that transform structures" (Sewell, 1996), in each case it is necessary to provide a quick summary of what these structures looked like at the beginning of the period under scrutiny. This section briefly examines the state of national political institutions of France, Honduras, Costa Rica and the United Kingdom before *election A*, the legislative election that inaugurates the period covered by the media sample, which ends at *election B,* when the electoral revolution materialized. Readers that just want to focus on the events of the period between the two elections that frame the electoral revolution can skip directly to section 6.2.

This paragraph offers a quick summary of the main similarities and differences between stating conditions. For France in 1962 and Honduras in 2009 the national political institutions were in a situation of extreme instability, with both countries having just been on the brink of dictatorship. While France had passed a fundamental Constitutional reform in 1962, Honduras' failure to reform its political system had been the cause for a temporary *coup* in 2009. In both cases, a large part of the population was opposed to the ruling elites and did not support the current political arrangements. The main political

parties were seen as too elitist, attached to power and not sufficiently concerned with the well-being of the people. Recovering institutional credibility from this initial situation of instability would lead in both cases to increased electoral participation in 1967 and in 2013.

On the other hand, Costa Rica in 1994 and Britain in 1998 were considered stable political systems, with consolidated institutions that favored old political parties. The main difference was that during the 1990-1994 legislature Costa Rican institutions had been generally positively evaluated, despite some use of smear tactics during the campaign, while in Great Britain, the administration been criticized in occasion of the emergence of corruption scandals. In both cases, alternation in government had brought hopes that credibility and transparency would increase, and the passing of important institutional reforms. The betrayal of these expectations played an important role in the dramatic falls of voter participation seen respectively in 1998 and in 2001.

6.1.1 – Institutions in France until November 1962

At the time of the November 1962 legislative elections, whether the French national institutions were credible was bring harshly debated. This election had come after decades marked by party system stability, cabinet instability, stagnation and alternation. During the interwar period of the *Third Republic*, centrist parties dominated the scene, acting as kingmakers for center-left and center-right coalitions. After a wartime interruption under a collaborationist regime, followed by Charles De Gaulle's leadership in 1945-6, the *Fourth Republic* Constitution restored representative democracy. Ironically, it also brought back hyper-parliamentarism under the historical parties' thumb (*Radicaux*, *Indépendents*). "*How was this possible?*" asked political scientist Francois Goguel in 1963. How could a political class of 10,000 to 15,000 cadres have captured sovereignty in the 1930s and, in spite of failure, resumed business as usual in the 1950s? The answer laid in the cartelization of the party system, and the French tendency to vote to defend oneself from the state, not to choose or approve of policy (Goguel, 1962). Tellingly, the public considered unions and interest groups more competent than parties, and closer to the people (Meynaud, 1962).

In 1958, the sudden escalation of Algerian decolonization brought the country on the verge of civil war, prompting party leaders to call De Gaulle back as the credible Prime

Minister of a cabinet o national unity. His election as president in early 1959 had deep unforeseen consequences for the future of politics, as the General's extreme popularity allowed him to accomplish a radical institutional transformation using two national referendums. The first (September 1958) approved a new semi-presidential constitution, the second (November 1962) introduced the popular election of the president. In between referendums, confidence in the institutions was low, especially in the countryside, where enraged farmers burned ballot boxes in the streets to protest their perceived lack of political power. An attempt on De Gaulle's life in Paris in August 1962 convinced the General to go on and complete his reform. Combined with the previous referendum, a more majoritarian system promised to curtail the power of political parties. In 1958, the "YES" got 79% of votes out of an 85% turnout, while in 1962, less than half of the registered voters agreed (62% of a 77% turnout). If the country had wholeheartedly supported the 1958 reform, things had slightly changed in 1962, when by all parties except the *Gaullists* and the *Communists* ran a strong campaign for the "NO". The most virulent critic of the Presidential reform among those that tried to block it was president of the Senate Gaston Monnerville. As the holder of a fundamental institutional role, he had given one of his most notorious speeches one week before the 1962 referendum, directly addressing De Gaulle with the words "*No, Mister President, you didn't have the right! You took it!*" He then asked the Supreme Court to deliberate on the reform's constitutionality, but the Court proclaimed itself incompetent and preserved the outcome of the popular vote.

The November 1962 legislative election came only three weeks after the referendum on direct presidential elections, and was still a competition among the historical French parties, showing a disconnection between the regime's functioning and its structure (Goguel, 1963). While non-political national diffusion newspapers tended to host journalists of different ideological persuasions, the biased *ORTF* national TV coverage for both the 1962 referendum and election, allocated large spaces to the Gaullists and letting the opposition speak only through the words of majority politicians (M. Charlot, 1965 book). The then four-year-old Gaullist *UNR-UDT* party ran its campaign on anti-establishment politics and national renewal, with TV journalists labeling it a "*formation Gaulliste*" to avoid calling it a party, as they painted other politicians in a negative light. This semi-dictatorial control strengthened De Gaulle politically, but undermined institutional credibility in the eyes of opposition voters. Furthermore, a large portion of the 1962 abstentions came from the centrist electorate, which feared that majoritarianism would lead to extreme Cold-War-style political confrontation with the left. Relying on an anti-

politics discourse endangered liberal democracy by producing disillusioned voters. Yet, the creation of a Gaullist political party, contrary to what others did in similar situations (e.g. Yeltsin) pushed in the direction of a hybrid system, allowing for the slow emergence of a balanced semi-presidential system.

6.1.2 – Institutions in Honduras until December 2009

Lacking a history of revolutionary events, in 2009 Honduras had a reputation for regime stability in the Central American region. Although the country was under military rule until the 1981 election, in the early 1990s President Carlos Roberto Reina signed reforms consolidating civilian power which stood the test of time. Presidentialism and alternation marked the representative politics of Honduras, which unfolded through a stable two-party system. Single-term Presidential limits shortened governmental agendas, especially given the strong internal competition inside two main parties, which brought into power currents with different ideologies. These limits had a negative impact on the perception of institutions, and for decade a political consensus had existed that the Constitution needed reforming. Credibility was low, but then it fell even further down with the 2009 coup against Zelaya.

In 2008, one year before ending his Presidential term, leftist *Liberal* President Manuel Zelaya started flirting with the idea of changing the Constitution. Zelaya proposed to add a *Cuarta Urna* (Fourth Ballot), to those for the Presidential, Congress and Mayoral elections of 2009*,* to authorize the planning of an *Asembléa Constituyente* (Constitutional Assembly). Politicians of both main parties criticized him, because they considered this project a violation of the Constitutional prohibition for Presidential attempts of re-election. Everybody wanted a reform, but the country's elites feared that, had Zelaya passed it, Honduras would have become a single-party socialist regime. In either case, the county was in a bind, since when the institutions consider a leader dangerous there are no devices to remove them under Presidentialism (Rodriguez, 2011). In June 2009, during the setup for a preliminary referendum asking the citizens if they wanted a *Cuarta Urna*, the political elites pushed back and ousted Zelaya by having the military transport him out of the country. The creation of an interim government – which president of the Congress

Roberto Micheletti led, and both main parties, the *Corte Suprema de Justicia* (*CSJ*),[348] and the Human Rights Commissioner supported – aimed for a quick normalization. Most Honduran MPs refused to call these events a *coup d'état*, adopting the euphemism "forced constitutional succession".[349] For them, Zelaya had violated the Constitution and the democratic process had continued, under a legitimate interim government.

It is now generally agreed that this political transition was a *golpe*, since removing a President from office violated the Honduran Constitution. Fortunately, the popular response in defense of democracy was overwhelming, with thousands of people pouring into the streets. Then, the sudden and massive emergence of a formal resistance movement made it hard for the interim government of Micheletti to justify its permanence in office. The *OEA*[350] (*OAS*, *Organization of American States*) had also expelled Honduras, demanding the immediate reinstatement of the exiled President. This counterbalanced the Obama administration's weak decision to treat Zelaya and the *golpistas* as equals (Fernández, 2009 *#12*). While curfew was declared in most of the country, high-level negotiations started in Costa Rica. A large protest held on July 28, exactly one-month after the *coup*, marked the beginning of an escalation in police and military violence. On August 21, a *CIDH* Human Rights report denounced widespread illegitimate use of force, at least four deaths and a hundred illegal detentions.

Micheletti considered keeping power and taking the full authoritarian route, but discarded it the massive street protests on Independence Day (September 15th), and under pressure from the international community. That a general election was already scheduled for December was a fortunate coincidence which allowed the *golpistas* to save face and restore democracy. After Zelaya's sudden reappearance at the Brazilian embassy in Tegucigalpa on September 21, Costa Rica and the United States approved the next elections if both main parties were allowed to run. The involvement of many prominent politicians and officials in the *golpe* damaged the credibility of Honduran politics, yet the activation of democratic antibodies had quickly made the situation unsustainable. as popular attitude changed from passive acceptance, to fierce opposition.

Even if the *Resistencia* movement considered it illegitimate because Zelaya had not returned to the country, the election's unfolding was quite similar to the previous ones, and Honduras had become a democracy again. Only a small number of international observing

[348] *Supreme Court of Justice*
[349] *sucesión constitucional forzada*
[350] The Spanish *OEA* (*Organización de los Estados Americanos*) replaces the English *OAS*, because *OAS* already denotes the French terrorists of the *Organisation Armée Sécrete* who fought against Algerian independence until late 1962.

missions came, but the election seemed well-run, with vote-buying and intimidations of voters/candidates around the same levels of previous elections. Just like the corruption of the Honduran political system had not started with the *golpe*, and did not disappear after democratic restoration, most of the 2009 abstainers had done so before because they did not feel represented by the two-party system.

6.1.3 – Institutions in Costa Rica before March 1994

In contrast with Honduras, post-1945 Costa Rican politics had remained democratic through a build-up of legitimacy and uninterrupted civilian rule that is unique to Central America. Costa Ricans tended to vote more than their neighbors, as the presence of a strong two-party system and the emergence of a number of nationally-respected political figures lent credibility to national elections. In many ways, there was a large amount of political capital to preserve, and a strong reputation of transparency and modernity to uphold. Protections against authoritarianism were also solidly in place and well-respected. As in Honduras, in 1994 the Constitution still denied Presidential re-election after a term (although this limit was lifted a few years later). Democratic Costa Rica could traditionally be characterized as a weak presidential system with a unicameral legislature of 57 MPs elected in 7 multi-member districts. This started to change in the 1980s, especially after the country defaulted on its debt for the first time in 1981 under the center-right *Unidad* administration of Rodrigo Carazo. From that moment on, Presidents started to rule by decree more frequently, side-lining the Congress and curtailing its powers. Yet, the proportional electoral system produced weak majorities, making it often hard to pass legislation, leaving governments to depend on the support of small third party MPs. Constitutional Court rulings (in particular of the *Sala IV*) were the main judicial device to check political power, and were consequently held in high regard (Booth, 1998).

In addition to being the most economically developed country in Central America, Costa Rica had an extensive network of public welfare services and state-owned enterprises which included healthcare, education, energy, and extended to the banking system. The state was still comparatively large in 1994, even if a wave of privatizations had started under the Arias (1986-90) and Calderón (1990-94) governments. In 1993 the country had committed to sign a third *PAE* (*SAP, Structural Adjustment Plan*) with the World

Bank, and Calderón's administration took credit for economic improvement, with GDP growth reaching 6% and single-digit inflation (Fernandez, 1994). The national political climate was vibrant, polarized by disagreement over the structural adjustment plans signed with international financial institutions. The consecutive elections of Calderón (*PUSC*) in 1990 and Figueres (*PLN*) in 1994 had helped institutional credibility by bringing to power the sons of two extremely well-known and respected former Costa Rican presidents. Yet, the historical legacy of their leaders attracted some accusations of "caudillismo" or personalism (Furlong, 1994).

The 1994 campaign had been fierce and included personal attacks, trying to link Figueres to a mining enterprise that was supposedly a cover for foreign investors, and Rodriguez (*PUSC*) to financial mismanagement in favor of his cattle ranching business (Lehoucq, 1994). Despite of the use of smearing tactics against their candidates, both main parties still enjoyed a good reputation. Overall, the 1994 election elicited strong popular participation, giving Figueres a clear mandate, even in the absence of an absolute Parliamentary majority for *PLN*. Opinion polls measured support for national institutions at the end of Calderón's presidency as also relatively high (Booth, 1998). Adopting Campbell's notorious classification, Fernandez (1994) appropriately labelled the 1994 election a *maintaining* election, symbolizing normality, continuity, as opposed to the dramatic consequences of *realigning* elections and the contingency of *deviating* elections. Furlong (1994) also pointed to the importance of a national culture of problem-solving compromise and negotiation, known as doing things "*a la Tica*" (Costa-Rican style). This style permeated all aspects of society, including institutional politics. Altogether, this meant that there were no pre-existing causes creating some historical necessity for a dramatic fall in political credibility of Costa Rica in the 1994-1998 period, which novel events and their unforeseen consequences provoked.

6.1.4 – Institutions in The United Kingdom before April 1997

At a general level, since 1979 British politics had seen extreme stability under the flag of *Conservative* single-party governments, but signals of discontent were growing in the population. By 1997, voter turnout had already fallen significantly from its historically high levels, dropping by 6.5% since 1992, despite the national election scheduled to coincide

with the renewal of local councils. At 71.3%, this was already the lowest level of electoral participation seen in the country since 1945. For understanding how a much more dramatic fall of turnout materialized in 2001, it is fundamental to establish where the country's political credibility was before 1997.

In 1992, the *Tories* had gained their fourth consecutive term in office, this time under the leadership of John Major. Their victory had been unexpected, given that *Labour* had taken a credible lead in most pre-electoral polls. This shocking result was the consequence of an unforgiving first-past-the-post electoral system where controlling parts of the country and being competitive in the rest was enough to secure a parliamentary majority. Unhappiness with the political outcomes that this harsh institutional device produced was so strong that the main third party, the *Liberal Democrats*, drafted in their platform a proposal for the adoption of proportional representation. Nevertheless, the general public was too attached to its traditional political system and the issue did not attract much consensus. In other words, there was widespread agreement about the problem, but not about its solution. Differently from Costa Rica, a series of events unfolding during the 1992-1997 period had already damaged British national political institutions. In fact, the 1997 election came at the end of a period of dissatisfaction towards politics and had seen a strong wind of anti-politics and strategic voting against the *Tories*.

Behind the *Conservatives*' unexpected confirmation in office in 1992 there had been a general perception of competency, authoritativeness and sound economic management. As the electorate was reluctant to change for fear of prolonging the recession that had started in 1990, the electoral calendar had certainly helped. Then in September 1992 an unexpected monetary crisis forced Britain to abandon the Exchange Rate Mechanism, damaging institutional credibility as a whole, and not just the *Tories*'. Despite strong economic recovery had come by 1997, credibility kept falling. Political and corruption scandals, generally known at the time under the label of 'sleaze' plagued the 1992-1997 legislature. In particular, privatizations came to be linked with corruption, and there were more ministerial resignations that in any British parliament of the XX century. Embarrassing episodes that remained impressed in the public mind, included politicians being exposed for demanding cash for media questions, the emergence of suspicious links to billionaires such as Mohamed al-Fayed, and alleged profits made selling weapons to Iraq. Meanwhile, the monarchy, the most ancient and respected British institution, had also lost some reputation, starting from a 1992 that saw two divorces within the Royal family.

Why then was there not already a restrictive electoral revolution in 1997? The long electoral campaign had failed to generate enthusiasm in the general public, and coverage of corruption had dominated for most of its six weeks. Opinion polls had shown how cynicism had spread towards politicians of all parties, and confidence in political institutions was declining (Butler and Kavanagh, 1997). Yet, hopes laid in the *Labour* party's ability to improve national politics. After all, 1997 had been labelled one the "*most innovative political contexts*" in decades, due to *Labour*'s transformation into a catch-all party and the new prominence of technology. 2001 would prove to be a very different context. In a post-1997 exit poll (*BBC/NOP*), 49% of voters considered Blair's party as the best positioned to tackle the 'sleaze' which had plagued the five years of the Major cabinet. The many corruption scandals and mismanagement could have just depended on the complacency of a party that had been in power for 18 years. In addition, intense public centralization had been sought in the Thatcher years (1979-1990) in any branch that had not been privatized. This curbed resources for local authorities. *Labour* promised to reverse this trend through an ambitious devolution agenda. Unfortunately for Britain, Blair's first term in office was problematic like Major's, and further damaged national political credibility, leading to a dramatic restrictive electoral revolution in 2001, with repercussions still felt.

6.2 – Tracing The Main Events Across The Cases

6.2.1 – France from 1962 to 1967:

Growing credibility in an expansive electoral revolution

TABLE 6.3 - FRANCE, 1962-1967
EVENTS affecting the CREDIBILITY of POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

period	date	focusing event	sample?	sign	intensity
NA	*[1963]*	Monnerville fights through Senate	*no*	*positive*	NA
NA	*[1963-64]*	left-wing parties opposition	*no*	*negative*	NA
NA	*[1963-64]*	Defferre candidature	*no*	*positive*	NA
NA	*[September 1965]*	Mitterrand candidature	*no*	*positive*	NA
NA	*[December 1965]*	Presidential election	*no*	*positive*	NA
40	*[February 1967]*	V Republic approval	*yes*	*positive*	-9.6%*

MAIN SOURCES: *Le Monde, Revue Française de Science Politique*

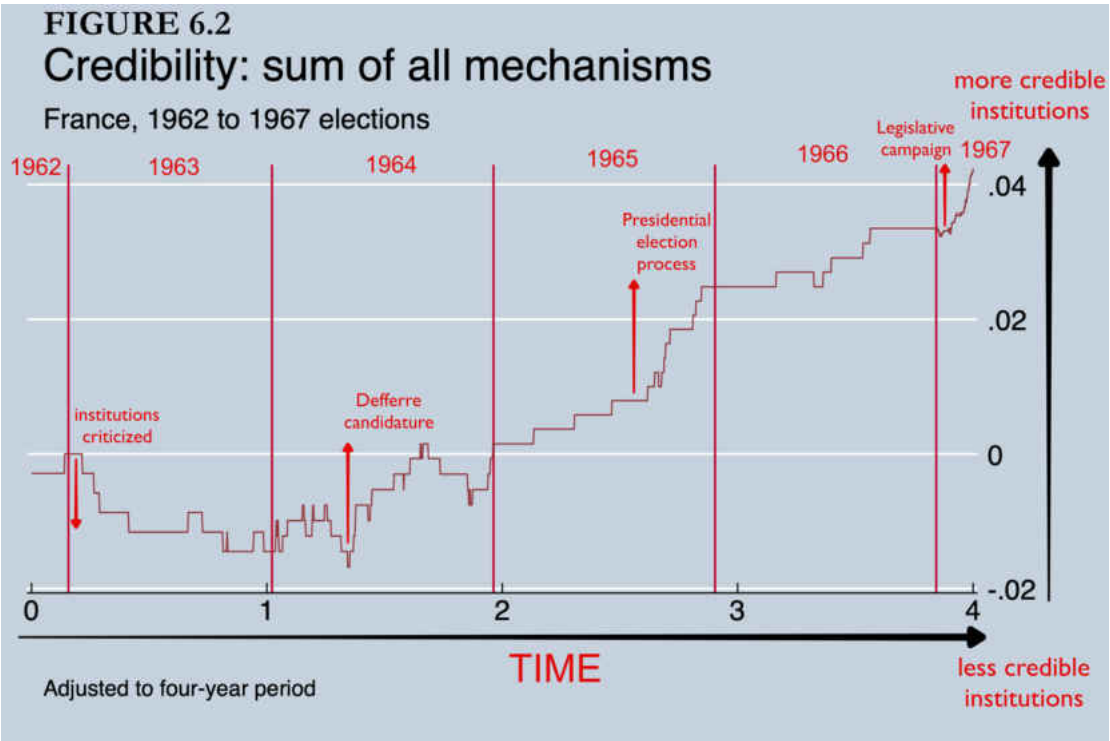
The introductory account for France (6.1.1) described how late 1962 saw the country's political institutions turn a historical corner. The French had trusted a strong leader to reform the Constitution and had voted for direct Presidentialism within the new framework of the *Fifth Republic,* hoping to keep at bay a political class of party leaders that they did not trust. Yet in the 1967 legislative election, only five years later, the population turned out massively to vote for those parties that they so much despised. This also happened after a direct presidential election that finally gave a direct popular mandate De Gaulle's power and could have made legislative elections irrelevant. The following year, 1968, millions among those dissatisfied with the electoral outcome of 1967, would take to the streets to demand radical change, their roar extending from the universities to the factories. How was that possible?

This account shows how after some initial uncertainty, the behavior of some political actors from the opposition, who bought into the new system and decided that betting against it was a losing game, was crucial to a positive final outcome. As Graph 6.5 shows in the following page, the credibility of the new political institutions had a slight negative trend in 1963 and early 1964. Several politicians directly attacked their legitimacy, and skepticism was widespread. The opposition parties had felt disrespected and were appalled at Gaulle's decision to implement a sweeping reform through plebiscitarianism. Two referendums in four years had left profound scars on the parties and on Parliament, which had been successfully sidelined. With the cabinet taking the lead in policymaking, many were afraid that France could still slip into full authoritarianism on the model of Franco's nationalist Spain. Until the left decided to play by the rules, institutional credibility could have still taken a dangerously negative trajectory.

The discursive legacy of the 1962 referendum and legislative election was visible through half of the party system, which expressed its open conflict with the current institutions. Therefore, 1963 and 1964 saw a long public conversation about the legitimacy and efficacy of the institutions of the *V^ème^ Republique*. This new institutional arrangement was different from the Parliamentary regimes that preceded it, but also from a full American-style Presidentialism. Their hybrid nature gained them some praise and was met with scorn by others. Arguing that the reputation of De Gaulle was the key factor behind the credibility to Presidentialism, many supposed that the system might not survive him[351]. As seen in the introductory section, President of the Senate Gaston Monnerville was a

[351] RÉGIME PRÉSIDENTIEL OU SCRUTIN A UN TOUR *Le Monde*, 2 Aug. 1963

vocal opponent of the reform. Early in 1962, he could have chosen to fight De Gaulle's reform through legal channels, and exploiting the powers emanating from his institutional position (Parodi, 1963). Instead, after the Constitutional Court showed no support to his agenda, he took the political route, fighting dialectically and practicing obstructionism in the Senate. He attacked a President that was not afraid to use blocked vote to rein in his MPs, sidelined the Parliament and exercised executive supremacy[352]. He lost his battle because his position made him look as a defender of the old parties in the eyes of the public. Having been president of the Senate since 1946, Monnerville was tremendously respected and his choice to go the political route had profound consequences on the future of French politics, since a long constitutional challenge to Presidential authority in 1963 would have undermined the new institutional arrangements.



The credibility trend in the data for the first sample-year was actually slightly negative, but within a very small number of articles (2% of the total for 1963). The stability of this new regime was not yet an established fact, given that the reforms lent themselves to interpretation as to what exactly the role of the President should have been. Arbiter above the parties, or party leader in chief? France could still choose full presidentialism, or see a return to parliamentary supremacy. The media also did not seem too interested in giving much space to the debates in the Senate, as some politicians lamented, even from

[352] "Nous sommes en pleine confusion des pouvoirs" declare M. Gaston Monnerville, *Le Monde*, 22 Nov. 1963.

within the majority.[353] Even with tones different from Monnerville's, most politicians of the opposition had adopted a strong stance against the new institutional arrangements, coherently with their own positions in the 1962 referendum. Pierre Mendès-France, former Prime Minister and respected politician of the *PSU*, also denounced what he saw an ultra-presidential regime in disguise.[354] As a politician of the older generation, he could see how the attitude of the current President, acting as a leader and not an arbiter of democracy violated the democratic spirit of the new Constitution.

Among the academics of the time, considerations over the present and the future of French political institutions were source of a lively debate. Among others, Vedel (1964), argued that justifying the current situation by claiming that under a different President French politics would normalize was irresponsible[355]. This position was understandable, De Gaulle's unilateral decisions had happened only a few months before. This line of thought was also in favor of adopting a general election, incorporating both legislative and presidential contestations, which would insure that the President could count on a stable majority and prevent abuse of power. Had France come out of a period of unstable governments to be plunged into a period of unstable institutions?[356] Arguably, the political stability of 1963-64 was the consequence of the control that the *UNR-UDT* kept on parliamentary debates (Emeri, 1963). That the Gaullist party (*UNR-UDT*) was able to keep strong party discipline was remarkable, in a political environment historically notorious for constant sniping and where about-faces where a simple fact of life. The emergence of the very English practice of block-voting was another exotic sign of change. the Pompidou executive quickly made the majority's elected MPs understand their subordinate role. In return, they sometimes expressed resentment by voting against the government's proposals (Emeri, ibid.)

Positive and negative considerations coexisted. In parallel to the discourse that questioned the new institutions, another thread had started their legitimization. This thread is responsible for the recovery of the quantitative trend observed for the second year, showing a positive sign (57% of articles positively judged the institutions) and also corresponded to a higher intensity in the coverage. Exemplary of this point of view was Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, then leader of the *Républicains Independents* and member of the

[353] UNE PROTESTATION CONTRE LE SILENCE DE LA TÉLÉVISION *Le Monde* 16 Nov. 1963
[354] "'Le Courrier De La République' Dénonce Le 'Régime Ultra-Présidentiel.'" *Le Monde*, 15 Sep. 1964.
[355] See also UN DÉBAT DE L'ASSOCIATION DE SCIENCE POLITIQUE SUR L'AVENIR DE LA CONSTITUTION
[356] LA LETTRE ET L'ESPRIT *Le Monde*

cabinet, who claimed that current regime still had parliamentary features that kept it stable.[357] In December 1963, from the opposition seats, Radical MP Jacques Duhamel was the first to imagine that the forthcoming Presidential election would revive the public life of the country, modernize its democracy.[358] In January 1964, an editorial by Maurice Duverger agreed that Presidentialism would force parties to reform, and underlined the importance of party-backed candidatures.[359] In late 1963, the emergence of a *Mister X*, a mysterious Presidential candidate of the left, had an important role in legitimizing the system. This is because the French felt reassured by the presence of a challenger to De Gaulle's power, especially after the media revealed that him to be Gaston Defferre, moderate socialist mayor of Marseille. Shortly after, came the declarations of René Capitant,[360] president of the Legal Commission, claiming the Defferre candidature reinforced the semi-presidential regime, by making the left play by the rules if they wanted to win the game. Defferre himself spoke highly of presidentialism and of the importance of having a warden of national institutions and of the political line that the citizens chose at the time of his election.[361]

While a plausible candidate emerged and some positive opinions were present, the sample shows a stability for institutional credibility in 1963-64, since the opposition's voices emerged as more numerous, and skepticism was still strong. For example, the *Communists*, while not having campaigned against the reform, still considered the current regime as imperialistic and anti-democratic. Their position was clear: fighting the personal power of De Gaulle with every tool, and advocating for a return to proportional representation.[362] With a similar tone, Socialist secretary Guy Mollet claimed that the President disrespected the Constitution and while the current system was no dictatorship, democracy was certainly gone.[363] The official organ of the socialist party also commented that the adoption of a presidential system had effectively disenfranchised most citizens, who did not want to choose "left or right".[364] At the same time, the left was already thinking of how to adapt to the new system and play it to their advantage.

[357] "LE RÉGIME PARLEMENTAIRE FONCTIONNE MIEUX Estime M. Giscard D'Estaing." *Le Monde*, 19 Dec. 1964.
[358] M JACQUES DUHAMEL la campagne pour élection présidentielle ranimera la vie publique, *Le Monde* 18 Dec. 1963
[359] Duverger, Maurice L'ÉLECTION PRÉSIDENTIELLE et la rénovation des partis *Le Monde* 11 Jan. 1964
[360] M CAPITANT UNR la candidature Defferre renforce le régime *Le Monde*
[361] M Gaston Defferre précise sa conception du rôle du président de la République et expose ses projets *Le Monde*
[362] L'HUMANITÉ CONDAMNE LES CONCEPTIONS MODERNISTES DE LA DÉMOCRATIE *Le Monde* 21 Mar. 1964
[363] M Guy Mollet ce n'est pas la dictature mais il n'y a plus de démocratie *Le Monde* 24 Nov. 1964
[364] LE POPULAIRE le produit d'un système antidémocratique *Le Monde* 11 Mar. 1964

The French people, consulted through a series of opinion polls, seemed more optimistic than their representatives. In 1964, three fourths of the interviewed proclaimed themselves happy to be able to elect the President (against 50% in 1945), even when counting only left-wing voters (Piret, 1964). They also seemed convinced that France was getting better political institutions (Piret, 1965), something which, after all, they had directly voted to approve. As shown in graph 6.2 at the beginning of the chapter, the discourse concerning credibility became 90% positive in the second half of the legislature. Most importantly, the first presidential election in 1965 contributed to increase the national political institutions' credibility. The transition from Defferre to Mitterrand as the candidate of the left was certainly not smooth, but its ultimate success was a fundamental step in the right direction because the *PCF* agreed to support him. Overall, the regular unrolling of the presidential campaign and of the two rounds of the election had a positive impact on the discourse about political institutions. If the *Vème Republique* still needed legitimation in 1965, nothing could be better than a direct presidential election where by a unitary candidate of the left took the current president the second round, therefore pushing away all talk of creeping authoritarianism and plebiscitarianism.[365]

Extremely relevant to an assessment of the improving credibility of the political system, is how the campaign was run by national television. Reacting to criticisms raised in 1962, the *ORTF* changed its tune, and due to the presence of five candidates (De Gaulle, Mitterrand, Lecaunet, Tixier-Vignancour and Barbu), only allocated one fifth of the total time to the majority's televised interventions (Rochecorbon, 1966). General De Gaulle was the only candidate not to use his whole given time, since he did not want to give an impression of authoritarian control over the process (ibid.). An independent national electoral committee supervised all emissions for the first time, and gave a serious, professional tone to the whole enterprise. As this formed a striking contrast with the Gaullist propaganda of 1962, the shock was great: out of the blue, the national channel exposed the French to two weeks of real opposition. It is hard to convey to the contemporary reader the importance of these events in legitimizing the *Vème Republique*, but one fact should suffice: it was the first time that the French had seen a *Communist* politician on television!

The regular contestation of the first Presidential election was therefore crucial in legitimizing the political institutions chosen by the French between 1958 and 1962, and the

365 M. Vallon (U.N.R.) : C'est La Fin Du Mythe Plébiscitaire M. Gazier (S.F.I.O.) : Allez-Vous Faire La Politique De M. Mitterrand ?" Le Monde, 13 Dec. 1965.

necessity of a second round appeased any worries of plebiscitarianism. Then during 1966, the commentary affecting credibility reflected the new positive assessment of the current institutions. The Presidential election of 1965 had been met with almost unanimous satisfaction by national political actors, a necessary step towards consolidation. After a strong showing by Mitterrand, the left could plan on winning in the future under the new institutions (although in reality they would have to wait until 1981 to do so). In addition, Jean Lecaunet and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, expression of the Gaullist and non-Gaullist center, were both explicitly supportive of what was now for everybody a *de facto* semi-presidential bicameralism.[366] [367] Even the politicians of the far right were in support of presidentialism. The main contentious point for the left was the permanence of the *Article 16*, which suspended constitutional guarantees in state of emergency, and which they promised to eliminate in case of electoral victory in 1967.

The last 3 months before the 1967 election, which included the partisan campaign, saw a higher number of articles concerning political institutions. At the official opening of the electoral period, the media considered the increased salience of the legislative election obvious: it had even been preceded by the longest pre-campaign in the history of France.[368] Importantly, Alfred Grosser underlined in an early February editorial how despite the differences in the parties' conceptions of the institutions, France was going to have free, representative elections, something that might have not been a given in past times.[369] In the same vein, Prime Minister Georges Pompidou, in one of his many Parliamentary interventions, correctly labeled the 1967 confrontation as "*the first normal legislative election*" of the *Vème Republique*.[370] Party politics had gained importance since 1962, and the merits went to a transparent Presidential election and to the left's acceptance of the new system. In spite of MPs' initial skepticism, the Parliament had adapted successfully to the new institutional arrangements and carved itself a role as a veto player.[371] The majority coalition's decision to call itself "*Grouping for the Fifth Republic*" once again was another signal of institutional legitimacy: the regime's good reputation was a politically-viable symbol (Goguel, 1967 ch.1). This should not be seen as a small accomplishment, since things could have certainly gone otherwise.

366 Barrillon, Raymond. "M. Jean Lecanuet Et Ses Amis Centristes Voudraient Concilier La Stabilité Des Institutions Avec L'apparition D'une " Majorité Nouvelle "." Le Monde, 23 Apr. 1966.
367 "M. Giscard D'Estaing Affirme Son Attachement Au Bicamérisme." *Le Monde*, 23 July 1966.
368 Viasson-Ponté, Pierre. "I. - Une Longue Précampagne." *Le Monde*, 14 Feb. 1967.
369 Grosser, Alfred. "Élections Libres." *Le Monde*, 6 Feb. 1967.
370 "M. Pompidou : Les Premières Élections Législatives Normales De La Ve République." *Le Monde*, 25 Feb. 1967.
371Passeron, André. "" Le Parlement S'est Maintenant Adapté Aux Conditions Normales Du Régime " Estime M. Pierre Dumas." *Le Monde*, 15 Feb. 1967.

As for the role of the left, if 1965 marked the inclusion of the *Communists* in the democratic process, their December 1966 electoral alliance with the *Fédération* obliged them to portray themselves as a reformist, responsible and plausible coalition partner. The result was that in 1967 no major parties were running on a platform that openly conflicted with the new institutions. On his side, François Mitterrand indicated with confidence that, had the left won the elections, its elected representatives would have been happy to comply with the rules of the current institutions.[372] He seemed assured that De Gaulle – who was planning on breaking his Constitutional role as the institutional arbiter by speaking the day before the election – would have respected the Constitution once the results came in, no matter the winner.

Overall, popular satisfaction with the 1967 electoral campaign was high (Labrousse, 1967, ch.7) and around a third of the French followed the evolution in the pre-electoral polls closely. Thanks to the alliance of the left the political choice set was extremely similar to 1965, which was instrumental to creating an image of continuity and legitimacy (Charlot, 1967, ch.6). The new Constitution was not perfect, but politicians of all sides had come to see it as preferable to the pre-1958 status quo. Jeanne Labrousse's remark that "*nothing came to perturb*" the 1965 equilibria disregards the tortuous historical trajectory of political alliances and debates, but accurately describes how popular trust in political institutions had not faded, but only constantly increased during 1966. Although its presence in the data is dwarfed by the number of articles devoted to the competition inside the party system, a clear empirical trend towards more credibility is very important for the purpose of this study.

Then on election day, March 5, 1967, the final outcome was overwhelmingly positive in terms of participation. Four million more voters went to the polls than they had in the legislative election of 1962. This established legislative elections as a nationally relevant political event at par with presidential elections, and with none of the negative connotations that are normally associated with second-order elections (such as the US mid-term polls). Parties had been capable of reforming without losing salience due to the emergency of direct elections to the highest office, and the parliament had successfully carved itself a new role alongside the executive.

372 M. B., J. "L'homme Qui Se Mettra Samedi En Dehors Des Lois Supportera Dimanche La Haute Cour Du Suffrage Universel Déclare M. François Mitterrand." *Le Monde*, 1 Mar. 1967.

6.2.2 – Honduras from 2009 to 2013:

Growing credibility in an expansive electoral revolution

TABLE 6.4 - HONDURAS, 2009-2013
EVENTS affecting the CREDIBILITY of POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

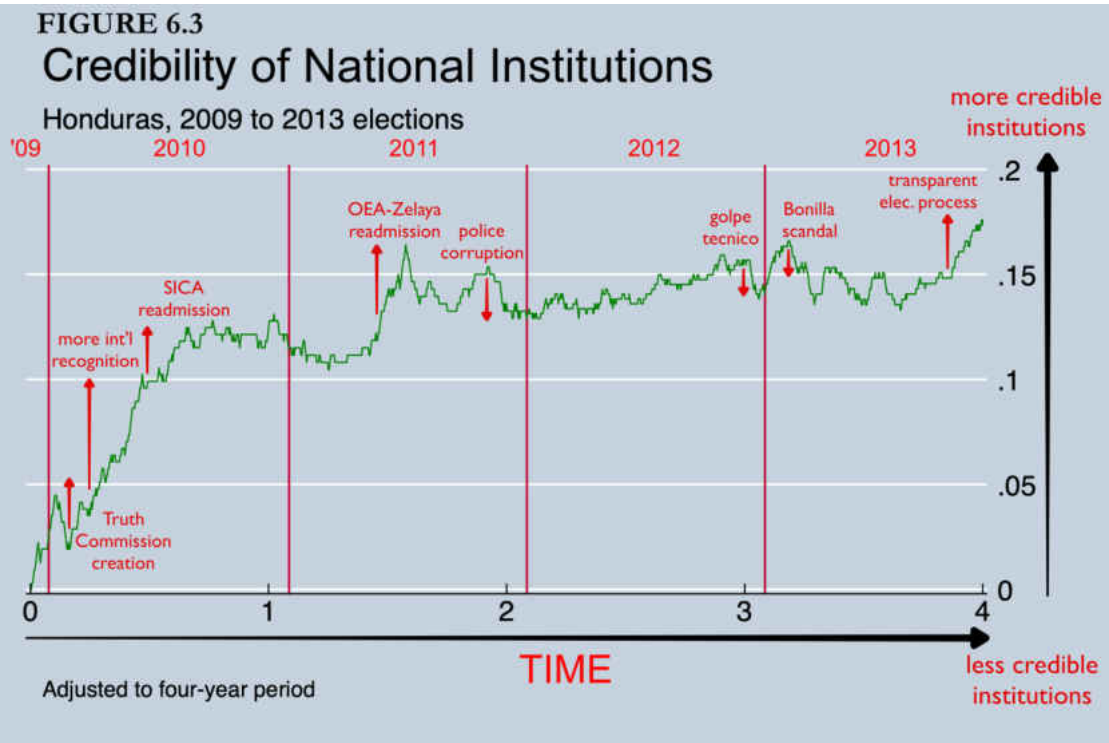
period	date	focusing event	sample?	sign	intensity
1	*[December 2009]*	return to democracy	*yes*	*positive*	44,74%
3	*[February 2010]*	Truth Commission creation	*yes*	*positive*	22,37%
4	*[March 2010]*	international recognition advance	*yes*	*positive*	12,78%
5	*[April 2010]*		*yes*	*positive*	28,76%
6	*[June 2010]*	SICA readmission	*yes*	*positive*	12,78%
11	*[December 2010]*	Zelaya/corruption	*yes*	*negative*	-13,08%
15	*[May 2010]*	OEA/Zelaya readmission	*yes*	*positive*	28,00%
19	*[September 2011]*	new Security minister	*yes*	*positive*	13,99%
20	*[November 2011]*	Castellanos' killing/pol. corruption	*yes*	*negative*	-17,48%
23	*[January 2012]*	new Security law	*yes*	*positive*	11,55%
32	*[January 2013]*	Constitutional court actions	*yes*	*positive*	10,10%
33	*[February 2013]*	'Tigre' Bonilla scandal	*yes*	*negative*	-17,68%
34	*[March 2013]*	fight against *Ley Mordaza*	*yes*	*positive*	10,10%
35	*[April 2013]*	police cleanup fiasco	*yes*	*negative*	-12,63%
39	*[October 2013]*	transparent electoral process	*yes*	*positive*	15,15%
40	*[November 2013]*		*yes*	*positive*	15,15%

MAIN SOURCES: *La Prensa, Revista Envio, Diario de la Conflictividad*

This section shows how growing political credibility in Honduras grew from 2009 and led to the 2013 surge in voter turnout. This claim can be controversial, as the *golpe* left important scars on institutions, while corruption skyrocketed despite the constant creation of special measures. The aim of this section is not to paint a rosy picture, but to explain the factors that led many Hondurans who had not voted in 2009 to go cast a ballot in 2013. Given how *expansive electoral revolutions* are not high turnout elections, but just large positive changes, the data does not need to show high institutional credibility, but only higher credibility in 2013 than in 2009. Some opinion polls support the idea of increased democratic credibility, others are harder to interpret, while trust in some institutions downright fell.

In particular, the *LAPOP* panel survey measured satisfaction with Honduran democracy at 37.4% of the population in 2008, 65.6% in 2010, and 52.6% in 2012. Solving the 2009 golpe restored some credibility, even if satisfaction with democracy then declined from 2010's peak. Even in 2014, after the new election, *LAPOP* measured it at 46.3%, 9% higher than the 2008 level under Zelaya. Support for democracy went from 59.9% in 2008,

to 62.6% in 2010, to 52.6% in 2012 to 65.8% in 2014, another sign that the 2013 election was positively valued. Yet, it is undeniable that other institutions, were going through a deep crisis. Levels of trust in the political party, in the police, in the judicial system, in Congress, had all fallen, but they did not dramatically diverge from other countries in the region, where Honduras was around the middle of the ranking.[373]



As Figure 6.3 shows, the transformation happened in the first 18 months, then the remainder of the legislature saw ups and downs before a positive campaign period. The tragedy of the 2009 *golpe* had the positive unforeseen consequence of bringing new political conversations into the mainstream. In 2009-2013 Honduran media discourse was even more focused on national institutions than in 1960s France, because of the interruption of democratic order. Then, the Lobo government had the merit of getting Honduras back into the international community, listening all parts of society, allowing the *Resistencia* movement to become a major political party, and removing officials compromised with the *golpe*. On the other hand,. Regarding bias in the print media, the daily newspaper chosen for the METAnalysis, *La Prensa*, was owned by a wealthy family with political ties, making its portrayal of the events, and of the Lobo administration somewhat skewed in the *golpistas'* favor. Yet, the government received space to fend off accusations, and the quantitative assessment shows more balance than one would think. In

[373] See "*Cultura política de la democracia en Honduras y en las Américas, 2014: Gobernabilidad democrática a través de 10 años del Barómetro de las Américas*" published by Vanderbilt University in January 2015 (p.117)

addition, trust in the media has grown over the past few years in Honduras, reaching 57.7% of respondents in the 2016/17 cycle of the *LAPOP* survey. Just like in the previous paragraph, this does not mean that the Honduran media landscape is idyllic, as freedom of the press is amongst the lowest in the world, but that its reputation improved over a certain period of time.

The first steps for fixing Honduran political credibility lied in Micheletti's acceptance of Lobo's electoral victory in 2009 and his absence at the Presidential inauguration.[374] Several editorials welcomed the return to democracy, greeting the country's narrow escape.[375] On aggregate, 2010 was the best year for credibility in the sample, at almost 65% positive coverage. The 2009 election had brought alternation, with the defeated *Liberal* party taking the blame for Zelaya's removal. Some claimed that the two traditional parties were the same, so the *Nacional* victory only consolidated the elites' power. This chapter begs to differ, showing a complex governmental trajectory. From the start, the new administration rose up to the challenge, while public protests raged, in continuity with the six months of the interim government. Lobo's media speeches tried to build trust, and he also unsuccessfully attempted to reconcile with the *Resistencia*.[376] Once officially in charge, he took an unprecedented positive step in creating a cabinet of national unity: all parties that had received a sizeable amount of votes obtained Ministries.

Crucially for credibility, the first year of the Lobo Presidency saw intense activity at the international level. The media closely followed the process, knowing that as a small and vulnerable country, Honduras could not afford isolation.[377] While the United States had validated the power transition, the *OEA* had not readmitted Honduras, since the new government's inauguration had made Zelaya's restoration unlikely. The European Union also strongly pressured Lobo to let the newly installed *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*[378] work, and to bring Zelaya back.[379] International organizations had denounced the human rights violations during the *coup* period, and the government tried to reassure them through institutional commitments.[380] Zelaya kept an ambiguous stance, trying to go unscathed through the reconciliation process especially after the confirmation of his arrest warrant

374 Roberto Micheletti dice que se irá el 27 de enero #30 *La Prensa* 7 Jan. 2010
375 EUA reconoce triunfo de Pepe y los comicios cumplieron estándares #2 *La Prensa* 1 Dec. 2009
376 "Yo no voy a defraudar a mi pueblo": Porfirio Lobo #23 *La Prensa* 25 Dec. 2009
377 "Esperan reconocimiento al gobierno de Lobo" #141 *La Prensa* May 4 2010
378 *Comisión de la Verdad y la Reconciliación*
379 "Honduras instala la Comisión de la Verdad" #140 *La Prensa* May 4 2010
380 "Lobo prometé a OEA crear Secretaría de DDHH" #257 *La Prensa* 23 Sep. 2010

in July. [381] [382] In parallel, the installation of a *True Commission* [383], incorporating internationally renowned personalities such as Guatemala's Rigoberta Menchú and Argentina's Nora de Cortiñas, promised more transparency than the official investigation. The international agenda's slow pace prompted Lobo to consult with all national parties and unions for discussing a Constitutional Assembly. Only the far right and the *Resistencia* refused.

An important fight for recovering credibility took place inside national institutions. Lobo seemed happy to bow to international demands for transparency, but the more conservative wing of both parties demanded a hard line, supported by the re-militarization of national security after 30 years, and a corrupt national police that often abused its power. In these initial months, the government dealt with the negative impact of the permanence of *golpistas* inside the institutions. The new Security Minister Óscar Álvarez had to spend months trying to clear the police ranks before trying to handle the uncontrolled violence. The *Fiscal General* (Attorney General), Luis Rubí, whose consent was necessary to bring Zelaya back, had also been picked by the *golpistas* and led a powerful clique. Lobo intended to fire him, but the *Corte Suprema de Justicia* intervened, and said that Congress was Constitutionally empowered to nominate, but not remove, the *Fiscal General*. The *CSJ* judges that violated the separation of powers in this case were the same that had approved the *coup*, undermining the credibility of institutions. Other g*olpistas* were still in Congress with the *Partido Liberal*, notably the interim President of the Congress Saavedra.

Intense public protests helped credibility by keeping the administration under pressure, signaling a continued interest in public affairs. The first anniversary of the *golpe* saw a massive street demonstration which brought out over 100,000 people in Tegucigalpa, asking for the convocation of a Constitutional Assembly. [384] By September they had gathered 1,342,876 supporting signatures. In response, the President stated that Congress should soon reform the laws on plebiscites and referendums.[385] The intensity of protests remained high in early 2010, and the government tried to address lingering public issues, starting from a long-awaited new minimum wage in late May.[386] Social tension peaked in August, when a standstill in negotiations between teachers and the government resulted

[381] "Manuel Zelaya pide no colaborar con Comisión" #167 *La Prensa* Jun. 9 2010
[382] "Reactivan órdenes de captura contra Zelaya" #211 *La Prensa* Jul. 28 2010
[383] *Comisión de Verdad*
[384] "Un año después del golpe" #184 *La Prensa* 30 Jun. 2010
[385] "Lobo: Congreso debe reformar el plebiscito" *La Prensa* #263 9 Oct. 2010
[386] "Lobo anunciaría mañana aumento al salario mínimo" #160 *La Prensa* 26 May 2010

in public sector strikes.[387] A second round of protests involving university students, asking for the head of the Education Minister Alejandro Ventura, took place in October.[388] Overall, 2010 marked significant progress on the road to normalization, and politicians expected readmission into the *OEA* early in the following year. By the year's end, 65% of Hondurans declared themselves satisfied with their democracy, which was quite an accomplishment.[389]

The peak in the recovery of institutional legitimacy in the sample was reached in mid-2011. On May 25, 2011 in Cartagena, Colombia, an agreement allowing for Zelaya's return was signed at the presence of Venezuelan and Colombian Presidents Chávez and Santos Calderón. At least half a million people welcomed the ex-President's reversion to Honduras without fear of imprisonment at the Tegucigalpa airport. Honduras' return in the *OEA* followed suit, with only one contrary vote from the Ecuadorian government, which recognized the progress in human rights, but considered Honduran democracy threatened by the power of the *golpistas*.[390] [391] Lobo used this event as political credit to hold a new round of *diálogos sectoriales* (sectorial dialogues) to reach a final decision on Constitutional reform. Three different positions were expressed. The first cited the lack of need for a Constitutional Assembly, since the Constitution could be reformed by two-thirds of Congress, which was the preference of Congress President Juan Orlando Hernandez.[392] The second option was to hold a Constitutional Assembly composed by members of the traditional parties. The third, proposed by the *FNRP*, was that the Constitutional Assembly include the "*partidos en formación*" (fledgling parties), plus representatives of civil society, of the main unions and of large corporations.

Arguably, the other fundamental element to restoring credibility was the creation of new parties, which did not just fix the consequences of the *golpe*, but improved on the pre-2009 status quo. For years, Hondurans had been under the impression that *Liberales* and *Nacionales* would have barred new parties from officially registering and competing in elections. Political credibility suffered from this lack of institutional outlets for dissent against bipartidism. Now within a few months several new parties representing the *Resistencia (LibRe),* the military, and Nasralla's *Partido Anti-Corrupcion* gained official recognition. In particular, Zelaya's inclusion through his wife Xiomara Castro's Presidential

[387] "Se estanca diálogo entre maestros y el gobierno" #226 *La Prensa* 14 Aug. 2010
[388] "Alejandro Ventura: "Es la coyuntura pedir mi cabeza"" #282 *La Prensa* 27 Oct. 2010
[389] "Honduras: 65% satisfecho con democracia" #308 *La Prensa* 23 Nov. 2010
[390] "Ecuador, solo contra Honduras en la OEA" #130 *La Prensa* 27 May 2011
[391] "Honduras cierra "capítulo" al volver a OEA" #135 *La Prensa* 2 Jun. 2011
[392] "Diálogos no buscan una Constituyente" #168 *La Prensa* 17 Jul. 2011

candidature, legitimized the 2012 primaries. Merits went to Pepe Lobo, who had taken *PAC* and *LibRe* seriously, treated them as real parties, invited them to sectorial dialogues, and legitimized them on the national scene.

On the negative side, 2011 ended on an extremely dark note when large student protests erupted at *UNAH* (*Autonomous University of Honduras*) against police corruption.[393] The killing of the son of the UNAH chancellor Julieta Castellanos by corrupt policemen had sparked their mobilization. The police institutions were so rotten that Lobo soon admitted that the investigations regarding their direct involvement in crimes were at ground zero.[394] Prolonged economic insecurity also hurt national credibility, with public expenditure out of control inside of corrupt public agencies (*ENEE*, *Hondutel*), while the Micheletti interim administration had spent recklessly. Even the *IMF* mission left Tegucigalpa without a memorandum of agreement.[395] In 2012, controversies emerged around the introduction of a *Security Tax*,[396] a levy on financial transactions to finance the struggling security apparatus, which the old elites disapproved. In June, tension rose high between the *Corte Suprema de Justicia* and the Lobo administration. First, when the new Education Minister Marlon Escoto fired 11 corrupt bureaucrats, the *CSJ* promptly intimated their reintegration. Then on August 15 the government passed a *Ley Anti-Evasion* (law against tax evasion) – rightly claiming that only in Honduras 99% of exemptions went to private businesses and not to NGOs[397] – but then the *CSJ* declared it unconstitutional. At this point 13/15 of the *CSJ* were still compromised with the *golpe* and served the old elites' interests. By September, government activity had come to a standstill, as most politicians busy with the primaries campaign.

By 2012 the positive effects of *Zelaya*'s return had exhausted, but despite the corruption scandals institutional credibility was largely stable in the sample, because of a slate of new policies attempting to address all sorts of issues. For example, the *TSE* (*Supreme Electoral Tribunal*) announced the implementation a new indelible ink to stop double voting in the primaries[398] and opened ballot counts to the public.[399] The best news for credibility lied in a strong wind of participation and re-democratization blowing across a country which had put the *golpe* behind. Strong primaries' turnout further legitimized the

393 "Estudiantes de la Unah protestan contra la corrupción policial" #267 *La Prensa* 23 Nov. 2011
394 "Lobo: "En investigación policial estamos prácticamente en cero"" #269 *La Prensa* 25 Nov. 2011
395 "Misión del FMI se retira sin informar sobre economía de Honduras" #265 *La Prensa* 20 Nov. 2011
396 known as *el tazón*, the big tax
397 "Sorteando oposición de liberales aprueban Ley Antievasión" #150 *La Prensa* 20 Jun. 2012
398 "TSE presenta tinta indeleble para elecciones primarias" #301 *La Prensa* 29 Oct. 2012
399 "Escrutinio de votos será a puertas abiertas: TSE" #311 *La Prensa* 2 Nov. 2012

new party system, as 1,337 thousand people voted for a *Nacionalista*, 716 for a *Liberal*, and 589 for a *LibRe* candidate. Stakes were high, and losers claimed to have been defrauded once the results came in. In the *PN*, Ricardo Álvarez asked for a full recount on November 20[400], which the *TSE* denied one week later.[401] Unsatisfied, Álvarez presented a protection appeal[402] to the *Supreme Court of Justice* (CSJ), with material proof of manipulation benefiting Juan Orlando Hernandez's current. As the situation escalated, Yani Rosenthal did the same within the *Partido Liberal*, which risked damaging party system credibility.

The government's decision not to wait for the *CSJ*'s verdict was a most controversial event. Several times the *Supreme Court of Justice* had hindered Lobo's plans, and now he settled the score. In a dramatic Congressional vote, 97 MPs voted to remove four judges of the *Sala Constitucional*[403] (the most important section of the *CSJ*) in a new breach of separation among powers. After hastily replacing those four members, the court itself validated the turnaround through a vote.[404] These events became known as the *golpe técnico*[405], and some scholars have since considered them as undemocratic as the *coup* against Zelaya, if not worse (Frank, 2018). Yet, they would have had more radical consequences for democracy if they had come at the beginning of Lobo's tenure. In general, we consider judges sacred, but the *CSJ* had been just as politicized during previous administrations and still served the interests of the military and political *golpistas*. Paradoxically, the *golpe tecnico* increased the importance of electoral politics by empowering Congress, a big risk before a 2013 election where a single-party majority was unlikely. In its coverage, the national media adopted a disgusted tone, which is understandable, since it had also approved Zelaya's ouster, but positively saw the actions of the Constitutional court to fight the *golpe tecnico*.[406] Since presenting a more nuanced account makes no difference to the public's exposure to this discourse, the coding applied is unchanged, and visible in the graph as a negative, then positive, shock to credibility.

Another event with a mixed impact on credibility was the early 2013 discussion of a Telecommunications Law[407], which tried to curb the immense power of the local tycoons, including the Ferrari-Villeda clan, powerful within the *Partido Liberal*. The elites claimed the

400 ""Queremos que conteo sea voto por voto": Álvarez" #364 *La Prensa* 20 Nov. 2012
401 "TSE deniega reclamo a Ricardo Álvarez" #378 *La Prensa* 29 Nov. 2012
402 *recurso de ámparo*
403 "La madrugada del golpe a la Corte Suprema de Honduras" #409 *La Prensa* 13 Dec. 2012
404 "Integran Sala Constitucional y pleno para resolver amparos" #27 *La Prensa* 18 Jan. 2013
405 "technical coup"
406 "El Congreso de Honduras les quita facultades a magistrados de la Sala Constitucional" #46 *La Prensa* 1 Feb. 2013
407 *Ley de Telecomunicaciones*

law violated freedom of speech, and dubbed it a *gag law*.[408] [409] The truth laid in between, with the administration trying to shield itself from the security crisis, and the media elites protecting their power. The whole issue lasted throughout spring 2013, with several entrepreneurial associations speaking against it.[410] *La Prensa's* initial coverage was negative, but then its inclusion of Lobo's justifications of the policy and of journalists' impassioned arguments defending free speech gave it a positive impact.[411] Corruption scandals inside the administration came out in 2013, most notably through the rise and fall of Juan Carlos "*Tigre*" Bonilla. A former military man, Bonilla had become the new head of Police in May 2012. His strong image made him the symbol of zero tolerance against crime and drug traffic. His sudden downfall came in February 2013, when his predecessor José Ricardo Ramirez alleged his responsibility in the killing of his son Oscar.[412] Bonilla's sudden embarrassing disappearance from the political scene preluded to the announcement of the failure in the police clean-up in April fiasco. The government had attempted to make all policemen take a polygraph test, but nobody was administering the tests.[413]

Public protests and strikes faded during 2013, as *LibRe*'s electoral campaign took over, riding the discontent among students and teachers. The last few months before the 2013 election saw a recovery of credibility in the sample. Unlike 2009, the new election had transformative potential, and all politicians expressed satisfaction in the improvements of the past four years. On May 24, 2013 the *Tribunal Supremo Electoral* officially called the population to a November election, respecting the Constitutionally-mandated calendar, another signal of institutional recovery. The general campaign was officially launched by the *TSE* on August 24, although in practice it was already going full force.[414]

Candidates took each other seriously as rivals, which helped credibility. All main parties signed a pact for a respectful campaign, then blatantly ignored it. Indeed, the campaign saw no shortage of personal attacks, lies, and insults. Another positive moment for credibility was the announcement of the largest anti-drug trafficking action in the history of the country. The government claimed to be about to confiscate assets worth 600-800 million US dollars (then 2.5% of GDP). They belonged to one the largest drug transport groups in Honduras, known as *Los Cachíros*, who responded with ominous

[408] *"ley mordaza"*
[409] "Jorge Rivera Avilés: "No se puede imponer una ley mordaza"" #63 *La Prensa* 14 Feb. 2013
[410] "Si perdemos la libertad de prensa, perdemos el país" #73 *La Prensa* 22 Feb. 2013
[411] "Lobo Sosa les pide a medios ser comedidos" #56 *La Prensa* 10 Feb. 2013
[412] "Ramírez señala al Tigre Bonilla de sospechoso por muerte de su hijo" *La Prensa* 22 Feb. 2013
[413] Rodriguez, Dagoberto "La depuración policial honduraña está en punto muerto" *La Prensa* #158 25 Apr. 2013
[414] "Políticos desafían ley con campañas" #282 *La Prensa* 25 Aug 2013

threats.[415] In October, the Industrials' Association accused the government to have hired *LATINCOM* to manage the electronic voting communications for election only to secure a favorable result. These accusations might not have been substantiated with evidence, but *LATINCOM* had been found guilty of fraud towards *HONDUTEL* in the past. All of this led to a very heated climate in the pre-electoral period.

Last, the campaign was marked by positive coverage of institutions, which contributed to a final surge of credibility, clearly visible in the graph. Appeals to voting in the media, absent in 2009, had been widespread.[416] The importance of institutional politics had grown, and expanded beyond a place for elite negotiations, as common people could rally in the streets, but also elect new candidates. In particular, both Nasralla and Castro spoke to parts of society usually uninterested in politics, youths, sports fans, union members and left-leaning middle class people. Ultimately, institutional credibility had recovered in only four years, extending its positive effects to the party system. What did not recover, were the conditions of the economy, the security of the citizens, and the corruption of the administration. The general election of 2013 was largely pacific. Voter turnout rose to 61% of the registered voters, a very high figure given the Constitutional prohibition of vote from abroad, and Juan Orlando Hernandez obtained the Presidency with only 37% of preferences. The two main parties, *Liberal* and *National*, which usually gathered a 95% joint vote share, had stopped at 57%. They would have fallen below 50% without the deployment of personal power and financial resources for an extravagantly expensive campaign. In Congress, *Liberals* and *Nationals* together gathered 75 seats, enough for having the absolute majority together, but ten short of the 2/3 majority for Constitutional amendments.

6.2.3 – Costa Rica from 1994 to 1998:
Falling credibility in a restrictive electoral revolution

The Costa Rican case clearly pictures how a country can lose its internal political credibility in just a few years. This dramatical political discourse shift happened through the build-up effect of the prolonged reappearance of political scandals, compounded by

[415] ""Los Cachiros" amenazaron a Juan Orlando Hernández" #321 *La Prensa* 4 Oct 2013
[416] "Todos a votar" #359 22 Nov 2013

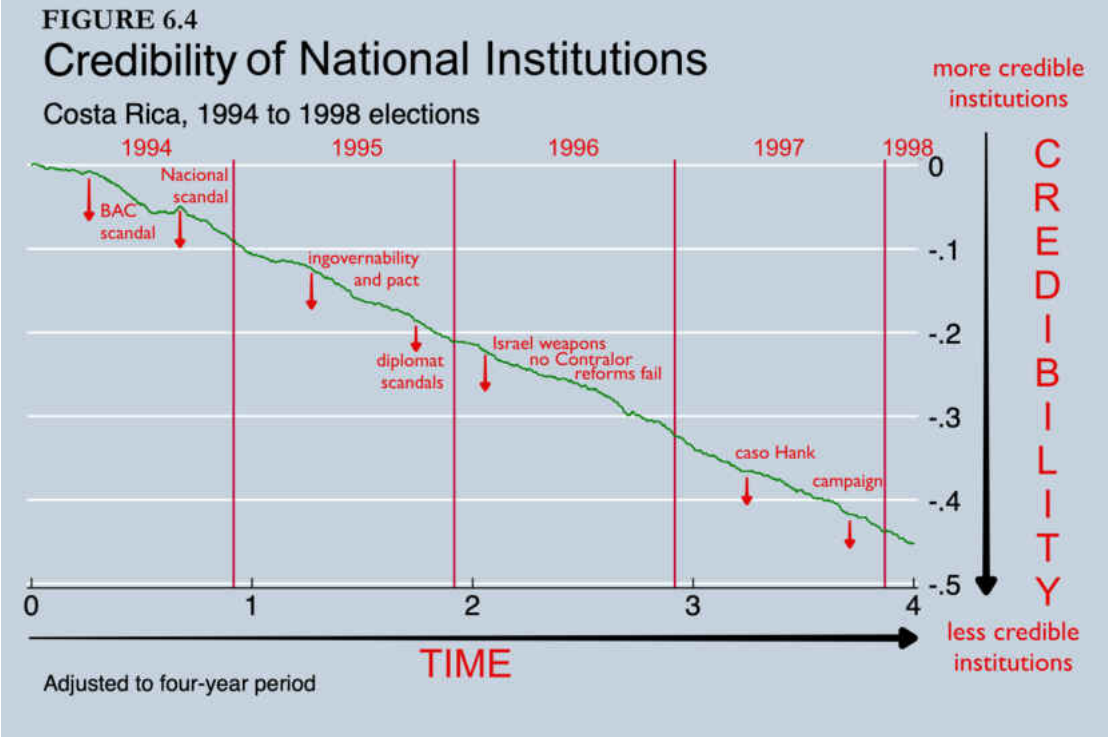
TABLE 6.5- COSTA RICA, 1994-1998
EVENTS affecting the CREDIBILITY of POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

period	date	focusing event	sample?	sign	intensity
4	*[June 1994]*	*Banco Anglo* scandal	*yes*	*negative*	-15,29%
5	*[July 1994]*		*yes*	*negative*	-21,27%
8	*[October 1994]*	emergence of political responsibility	*yes*	*negative*	-12,63%
9	*[December 1994]*	conflict with judiciary	*yes*	*negative*	-19,28%
10	*[January 1995]*	administrative chaos	*yes*	*negative*	-18,40%
13	*[May 1995]*	ungovernability speech	*yes*	*negative*	-11,73%
14	*[May 1995]*	*Millicom* scandal	*yes*	*negative*	-15,08%
15	*[June 1995]*	apathy in polls	*yes*	*negative*	-17,59%
18	*[November 1995]*	*Ardino* & *Mihailov* scandals	*yes*	*negative*	-15,91%
19	*[December 1995]*	democratic deterioration	*yes*	*negative*	-15,08%
21	*[January 1996]*	wiretapping scandal	*yes*	*negative*	-13,81%
22	*[February 1996]*		*yes*	*negative*	-10,85%
23	*[March 1996]*	incomplete electoral reform	*yes*	*negative*	-11,83%
26	*[May 1996]*	Israel weapon scandal	*yes*	*negative*	-10,85%
27	*[May 1996]*	country with no *Contralor*	*yes*	*negative*	-22,68%
29	*[December 1996]*	reform failure	*yes*	*negative*	-12,82%
30	*[January 1997]*	national team coach fired	*yes*	*negative*	-18,85%
31	*[February 1997]*	bad opinion polling	*yes*	*negative*	-11,08%
32	*[March 1997]*	corruption exposed	*yes*	*negative*	-14,78%
34	*[July 1997]*	public expenditure outrage	*yes*	*negative*	-10,16%
35	*[September 1997]*	campaign criticized	*yes*	*negative*	-12,93%
36	*[October 1997]*	apathy, no confidence	*yes*	*negative*	-10,16%
37	*[November 1997]*		*yes*	*negative*	-16,62%
39	*[December 1997]*	abstention predictions	*yes*	*negative*	-12,01%
40	*[January 1998]*	apathy marks end of campaign	*yes*	*negative*	-12,93%

MAIN SOURCES: *La Nacìon*, *Revista de Ciencias Sociales*

slow policy response. Two credibility components in the sample were constantly negative: the economy, and the judgement of national institutions. Public finances started deteriorating early on, and stabilized only in late 1997, while the continued appearance of public sector scandals kept the judgement of national institutions negative until the end. Except for a wave of strikes in 1995, the absence of large protests contributed to falling electoral participation in 1998, suggesting that protests and turnout might be complementary factors. This account shows that politicians' failure to address the political paralysis of Costa Rica led to a fall in voter turnout that the media actually expected, and rationalized, a full year before 1998. Then an uneventful campaign saw a disillusioned electorate reject the candidates' promises.

Archival data collection, with no machine-led selection of a "political thread" of discourse, resulted in a sample containing more articles focused on the economy, policy, and public protests. This allows for a fuller evaluation of how the national institutions' reputation evolved with limited use of secondary sources outside *La Nación*. The negative portrayal of national institutions was not an editorial decision, but the consequence a series of dramatic events. Given *La Nación*'s prominence, most Costa Ricans were exposed to focusing events with a lasting media presence. The number of salient events is so high that choices were made, to cover the whole period while showing a range of different phenomena. Figure 6.4 is extremely telling as to how constant the fall in credibility was after the very first few months.



Of the 1379 articles collected for 1994, 626 were coded for institutional credibility, 94 of which had positive content (29%). This indicates how the deterioration started early on, as the scandal around the mismanagement in the *Banco Anglo Costarricense* (*BAC*) was the key event for the whole legislature. Coming only four months after the election, it scarred an inexperienced administration, receiving ample media attention because of its proportions and unprecedented nature. Its continued coverage negatively impacted credibility during all four years. The crux of the matter lied in *BAC* purchases of foreign bonds that were too risky for a public bank's portfolio, resulting in exorbitant losses

estimated around 10 billion *colones*.[417] Other losses had come from years of buying small companies at an overvalued price. Since the *Anglo* was one of the largest public banks, both main parties were involved. For *PLN*, in the 1980s President Figueres had partnered with the Lopez brothers, who had negotiated a risky purchase of Venezuelan public bonds for the *Banco Anglo*.[418] For *PUSC*, the Calderón administration had known about *BAC* for months, had nominated all managers on trial, but had hoped not to have to deal with it. Rumors of public intervention, which would have made taxpayers cover political mistakes, began in June 1994.[419] In August it emerged that the bank's directors had known of the operations since 1992, and that the Lopez brothers' had used an unauthorized intermediary to sell their bonds.[420] Then instead of a bailout, on September 14 the government announced *BAC* 's imminent closure, signaling that crimes would be punished.[421] Its proclamation on Independence Day, by the son of the President that nationalized *BAC* in 1948 (Raventós, 1995) allowed a brief recovery of credibility, as the public approved.[422]

These credibility gains ended two months later, when an investigation revealed that the *Banco Nacional* (*BN*) had also conceded loans to a rice producer, accumulating losses over 1B *colones*.[423] Four top *BN* managers were immediately suspended.[424] These cases had such high stakes that one of the investigation's leading judges, *Bernán Salazar*, was replaced for discussing the case outside of the courtroom.[425] Both cases received extensive coverage for months to come. Autumn 1994 also brought to Parliament the negotiation of the third *Structural Adjustment Plan* (*PAE III*), object of continuous quarrels between *PLN* and *PUSC*. The final outcome was a mild package of public sector cuts, mockingly dubbed *PAE a la Tica*.[426] The year ended darkly, with the revelation of the June deportation of four Venezuelan citizens suspected of criminal activity, in clear suspension of *habeas corpus*. In late November it emerged that the *Supreme Court* had never been consulted, and the Minister of Justice had explicitly asked the *OIJ* (Judicial Investigation) deputy not to inform his superiors.[427] Commentators described the lack of valid explanations, and the opaqueness of the administration, as a sign of institutional deterioration.[428]

[417] circa 150 million 2019 US dollars.
[418] "Figueres hermetico sobre hermanos Lopez" La Nación 2 Jul. 1994
[419] Angulo, Marcela "El pueblo paga" La Nación 8 Jul. 1994
[420] Noguera, Yanancy & Rodolfo Martín "ATF operó sin estar autorizada" La Nación 9 Aug 1994
[421] "Fin al Banco Anglo" La Nación 15 Sep. 1994
[422] Mayorga, Armando "Mayoría respalda cierre" La Nación 18 Sep. 1994
[423] "Investigarán cúpula del Nacional" La Nación 13 Nov. 1994
[424] "De nuevo la banca estatal" La Nación 16 Nov. 1994
[425] Mendoza, Dixie "Separado juez Salazar del caso Banco Anglo" La Nación 23 Oct. 1994
[426] Chaverri Soto, Danilo " "PAE a la Tica": mala renegociación" La Nación 22 Oct. 1994
[427] "Una censurable artimaña" La Nación 25 Nov. 1994
[428] Fonseca, Edgar "De guasones y mordazas" La Nación 28 Nov. 1994

The credibility discourse shrank in volume, but stayed negative in 1995. Out of 396 articles, only 100 (25.2%) gave a positive evaluation, actually slightly less than in 1994. In early 1995 the economic situation became critical, and elicited a woefully inadequate political response. In 1994, excessive public sector spending unmatched by sufficient income had led the deficit/GDP ratio to -7.1% and interest rates over 30%.[429] On February 25, the *IMF* extended a credit line, but the *World Bank* rejected the government's plan for *PAE III* the following week.[430] In this situation, the signing of a pact between the two main parties *PLN* and *PUSC*, felt like more like a liability than an accomplishment.[431] In particular, it was necessary to "*earn once again credibility amidst the void in which the country fell in only 12 months of new administration*" as an overgrown bureaucracy, scarce flexibility and fear of conflict that had led to paralysis.[432] [433] Even President *Figueres* made a fundamental misstep, defining the country ungovernable in his May Day speech. It was not a moment for high hopes, as *politicians* seemed to have left the *political* behind,[434] and by October the public opinion assumed a negative attitude towards the pact.

Costa Ricans' awareness of the poor condition of their national institutions is traceable through the results of 1995 opinion polls. In February, a survey revealed that 69% of citizens believed only some public servants to be honest, while a staggering 94% thought governments gave little or no attention to citizens' opinions. Moreover, since the electorate had chosen *PLN* in 1994 to avoid more public cuts, and the government was curtailing public spending, in April 75% of responders disagreed with current economic policy.[435] Another *Unimer* survey published in June estimated that 48% of Costa Ricans considered themselves disillusioned by politics.[436] Several editorials commenting these negative results mentioned how a lack of credibility was the issue hurting citizen participation.[437] In October, 71% of Costa Ricans recognized the need for new political formations and would help to create one, with 68% believing that no existing group could take a leading role.[438] Last, the publication of an article on abstentionism in December resulted in a flood of letters agreeing that there was nobody to vote for.[439]

[429] Mejia, Alberto Franco "Menos gasto público o crisis" La Nación 11 Mar. 1995
[430] Barquero S., Marvin "Socollón económico" La Nación 3 Mar. 1995
[431] Fonseca, Edgar "El pacto...credibilidad" La Nación 1 May 1995
[432] Spanish: "*granjearse de nuevo la credibilidad en medio del vacío en que cayó el país en tan solo doce meses de la nueva administración*"
[433] Sanchez Alonso, J.A. "Restauración e ingovernabilidad" La Nación 5 May 1995
[434] Ulibarri, Eduardo "Lo político y los políticos" La Nación 12 Oct. 1995
[435] Alvarez Ulate, Arturo "Rechazo a medidas económicas" La Nación 3 Apr. 1995
[436] Herrera, Mauricio "Apatía carcome a Ticos" La Nación 18 Jun. 1995
[437] "Otra urgente reforma" La Nación 18 Jun. 1995
[438] Martínez, Mauricio "Decepción golpea a partidos" La Nación 10 Oct. 1995
[439] Muñoz de Antillon, Flora "Apoyo al abstencionismo" La Nación 28 Dec. 1995

The emergence of a string of intense protests was a logical consequence of lost credibility. In February, a long, contentious strike at the Puntarenas hospital took center stage. The criticisms touched even doctors, accused of using the practice of *biómbo*[440] to profit within the universal care system.[441] In April/May, another prolonged strike demanding payment of government pensions paralyzed the Limón hospital.[442] A unions called a third strike in the electric utility *ICE*, to protest its collaboration with *Millicom*, a telephone corporation suspected of mismanagement. The anti-corruption nature of this specific protest elicited a positive coverage, which was labeled "*una huelga justa*".[443] Then July's teachers' strike against a reform of public pension benefit accruals drew the largest crowds. A prominent union leader explicitly explained how the demonstrations transcended teachers' issues and were the only way to protest the *Figueres-Calderón* pact.[444] After six weeks without classes, the mediation of the national university President was decisive for reaching a deal.[445]

Two diplomatic incidents ended the year, further damaging political credibility. First came the news that Italian diplomat Giovanni Ardino, who formerly represented Costa Rica in several European countries, was under process in Ancona (Italy) for "criminal association".[446] Then in mid-November, Sergej Mihajlov, Costa Rican consul to Russia since February 1994, was also a prominent organized crime godfather in Moscow.[447] *PLN* and *PUSC* had each nominated one of these dark representatives of Costa Rica abroad, yet politicians seemed completely oblivious as to how this could have possibly happened.

Only 96/354 (27%) articles coded for credibility were positive in 1996, in line with 1994 and slightly over 1995. While institutional legitimacy stayed low, public protests ended with the strikes' settlement. Politicians' unwillingness to compromise for the good of the country emerged through contentious political decisions and Constitutional projects. In March, Congress discussed reforms that were an opportunity to improve arrangements seen as protecting a stale bipartidism. Some effective proposals introduced new limits to public contribution to campaigns, and greater transparency in private donations. Yet, no provisions to help smaller parties, or to mandate open candidate selections was introduced,

[440] A *biómbo* is a folding screen, used to hide from sight those receiving better-than-average care at public hospitals.
[441] "Una huelga inhumana" La Nación 11 Feb. 1995
[442] Ramírez, Alexander & Emilia Mora "Estancado conflicto en Limón" La Nación 28 Apr. 1995
[443] Cordero, Juan Fernando "Una huelga justa" La Nación 17 May 1995
[444] Ramirez, Alexander & Maria Isabel Solís ""Esta huelga es crucial"" La Nación 17 Jul. 1995
[445] Alvarez Ulate, Arturo "Acuerdan fin de huelga" La Nación 17 Aug. 1995
[446] Fonseca, Edgar "Los nexos de Ardino" La Nación 5 Nov. 1995
[447] "Mihajlov en las fronteras de la ley" La Nación 18 Nov. 1995

limiting the impact for the general public.[448] Ex-President Oscar Arías spoke vehemently against the project, questioning the partial reforms and advocating for widespread economic measures.[449]

The other main political events of 1996 showed lack of transparency, inability to cooperate and a scarce attention to the public. In May, it became known that *Contralor*[450] Samuel Hidalgo had blocked a purchase of 1B *colones* worth of Israeli armaments, officially because the Civil Aviation's lack of funding. The government responded with an executive decree, officially denying access to archives, registers and reports containing information related to money laundering, drug trafficking and weapon purchases. Several articles lamented how this destroyed the transparency owed in the use of public funds. To aggravate matters, Hidalgo was up for re-election and *PLN* had proposed Rodolfo Silva, whom *PUSC* disliked.[451] Lack of compromise left Costa Rica with no *Contralor* for weeks, successfully eclipsing the news that inflation rates were under control.[452] In the summer, the discourse shifted to the reform of public campaign contributions, the so-called *"deuda política"*. Despite evidence of excessive campaign costs to the public,[453] neither party wanted to act before the Presidential primaries, while their cancellation would have been a gift to organized crime.[454] After prolonged debate, in August a bipartisan commission finally capped public contributions to 0.19% of GDP.[455] Even worse, fears of a *PUSC* victory in 1998 sank the governmental project of a 5-year Presidency, supposed to stabilize and prolong policy agendas.[456]

Because of co-government, all reforms followed a long process of compromise, and their final version was often incomplete. The shortening of electoral campaigns to two months – to save money and align with international praxis – was the only positive note.[457] Meanwhile, the staggering growth of public debt had led to media speculation that the government had put public property on sale for pennies, as the country marched towards a repeat of the 1982 default. This uncertainty led 69% of Costa Ricans aged 15-25 to believe that the country's situation could only worsen in the following five years.[458] The

448 "¿Una oportunidad perdida?" La Nación 12 Mar. 1996
449 Arías, Oscar "Las oportunidades perdidas" La Nación 15 Mar. 1996
450 General Auditor
451 Mendez Garita, William "País sin Contralor" La Nación May 8 1996
452 Chacon, Lorna "Inflacción llego al 0.76% en abril" La Nación May 8 1996
453 Matute, Ronald "Incierto recorte a deuda política" La Nación 18 Jul. 1996
454 Murillo S., Victor Hugo "Deuda política e intenciones" La Nación 20 Jul. 1996
455 Matute, Roland "Acuerdan recortar deuda política" La Nación 18 Aug. 1996
456 Ulibarri, Eduardo "Intereses, no razones" La Nación 13 Sep. 1996
457 Murillo S., Victor Hugo "Respiro al ciudadano" La Nación 10 Oct. 1996
458"Percepciones juveniles" La Nación 13 Dec. 1996

Central Bank president intervened to clarify that Costa Rica was not collapsing, and debt was targeted because it burdened the country, hurting the quality of public services.[459]

Looking at aggregate credibility for 1997 and January 1998, a 31% positive coding is the highest in four years, but mostly due to economic improvements, and institutional mechanisms remained only 24% positive (62/253). Corruption and mismanagement remained prominent, and lack of improvement, disillusion and disengagement of Costa Ricans were crucial for the dramatic fall in electoral participation in February 1998. Ironically then, the final sample-year opened on a positive note for political credibility, with the elimination of electoral censorship in March 1997. The *Supreme Electoral Tribunal* (*Tribunal Supremo Electoral*, *TSE*) had been strictly regulating the timing and content of electoral propaganda. On March 21, the *Sala IV* of the Constitutional Court declared it unconstitutional, *de facto* liberalizing political campaigns and eliminating so-called "electoral crimes".[460] Eduardo Ulibarri praised this injection of uncertainty into national political discourse, but warned readers that freedom is not always an improvement: democracy must be used responsibly.[461]

Then, a presidential candidate's involvement in a scandal made this already grim picture worse. In May 1997, the national media exposed a meeting in Toluca, Mexico between Carlos Hank and Miguel Angel Rodríguez, known as *caso Hank*. Carlos Hank, a Mexican citizen, had been an influential Minister in the Salinas cabinet (1988-1994), who had since been credibly linked to drug traffic. Since Rodríguez was leading the 1998 Presidential polls, this story undermined a possible argument for the benefits of two-party alternation.[462] In an April *UNIMER* survey, 45% of responders of all ages believed that things would worsen by the end of the *Figueres* presidency.[463] When asked for the causes of this grim situation the top choice was corruption (77%) followed by "politicians and political system" (63%), reflecting the scandals' negative impact on credibility.[464] They had started in the *Anglo* and the Civil Aviation, but since then included other events such as the concession of illegal loans by *BICSA,*[465] favoritism in concessions by *MOPT*[466] and the arrest of former MP Ricardo Villalobos for bringing cocaine into the country.[467]

459 Bolaños Zamora, Rodrigo "Mitos y realidades sobre la deuda" La Nación 2 Dec. 1996
460 "Bienvenida más libertad" La Nación 22 Mar. 1997
461 Ulibarri, Eduardo "Normas de libertad" La Nación 26 Mar. 1997
462 Cordero, Juan Fernando "El bochorno Hank" La Nación 28 May 1997
463 Herrera, Mauricio "La decepción va a las urnas" La Nación 20 Apr. 1997
464 "Preocupación en cifras" La Nación 20 Apr. 1997
465 *Banco Internacional de Costa Rica*
466 *Ministerio de Obras Públicas y Transportes* (English: Ministry for Public Works and Transports)
467 Herrera, Mauricio "Corrupción paralizante" La Nación 20 Apr. 1997

Many apparently minor events of symbolic value showed falling credibility in the last phase. In late July, the share of citizens committed to non-vote had risen to 26%, or 35% with *indecisives,* which a month later had become 30 and 42%.[468][469] Citizens felt that politicians had betrayed them, and appeals to electoral participation out of responsibility were met with apathy.[470] Even football offered appropriate parallelisms: Costa Rica had a strong national team, but it had fired its Brazilian coach and would not go to the 1998 *FIFA World Cup*.[471] Another on-point commentary explained these dramatic figures with a political class stuck on traditional deal-making while flexibility was key to survival.[472] As campaigns were set up, the Costa Rican electorate seemed absolutely unconvinced by candidates' promises: the gap between commitments and achievements had reached at a point of non-return.[473][474] This was reflected by the monotony of televised interventions, all focused on the same themes: the *caso Hank*, cost of living, food stamps, the youth, drug trafficking and tourism.[475] How much the public cared was shown by the audience of the only televised debate between Corrales and Rodríguez: 20,000 people, or a 1.5% share.

Apathy towards institutions dominated the last year. Having failed to appear credible, the campaigning parties became easy to ignore. During the final month, politicians and pundits tried shaming potential non-voters, describing them as parasites and killers of democracy, or partially blamed political dissatisfaction on the press.[476][477] A third-party candidate even seemed convinced that political apathy had been invented by pollsters and journalists, while Ulibarri argued that the present situation was harder than having to face widespread public protests with clear demands.[478][479] The people remained unswayed, as streets stayed remarkably silent in comparison to previous campaigns.[480] Five days before the election, the *Central Bank of Costa Rica* announced a projected GDP growth for 1998 of 4.5%.[481] It was too late, as the electorate had made its choice, which for a record 30% of registered voters was to abstain. The consequences for the Costa Rican party system would be profound.

468 Matute, Ronald "Apatía sacude campaña" La Nación 24 Jul. 1997
469 Herrera, Mauricio "Abstencionismo al acecho" La Nación 23 Aug. 1997
470 "La sanción de los votantes" La Nación 25 Jul. 1997
471 Ulibarri, Eduardo "La metáfora del futbol" La Nación 12 Aug. 1997
472 Ulibarri, Eduardo "Un complejo antídoto" La Nación 24 Aug. 1997
473 Mayorga, Armando "Pereza electoral" La Nación 16 Oct. 1997
474 Formoso, Manuel "La politica del arcangel" La Nación 19 Oct. 1997
475 Matute Charpentier, Ronald "Monotonía atrapa a la propaganda" La Nación 14 Dec. 1997
476 Alvarez Herrera, Ricardo "Parasítos de la democracia" La Nación 12 Jan. 1998
477 Gilmour, David "Apatía del votante y prensa" La Nación 18 Jan. 1998
478 Matute, Ronald ""No hay apatía"" La Nación 24 Jan. 1998
479 Ulibarri, Eduardo "Dos caras de la apatía" La Nación 26 Jan. 1998
480 Guevara, José Davíd "Frío clima electoral" La Nación 31 Jan. 1998
481 Noguera Calderon, Yanancy "País crecería 4,5%" La Nación 28 Jan. 1998

6.2.4 – Great Britain from 1997 to 2001:

Falling credibility in a restrictive electoral revolution

TABLE **6.6** - GREAT BRITAIN, 1997-2001
EVENTS affecting the CREDIBILITY of POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

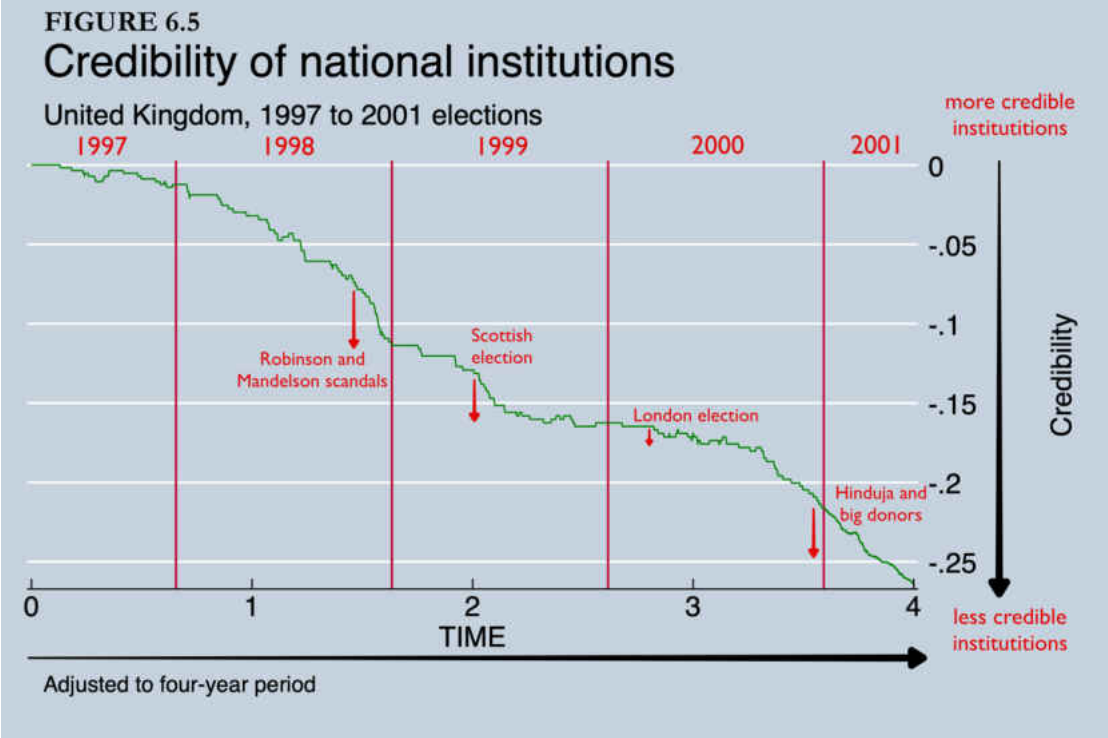
period	date	focusing event	sample?	sign	intensity
NA	*[November 1997]*	Eccleston quid pro quo	*no*	*negative*	NA
13	*[August 1998]*	Alastair Campbell anti-democratic	*yes*	*negative*	-13,24%
15	*[November 1998]*	Robinson-Maxwell deal	*yes*	*negative*	-11,03%
16	*[December 1998]*	Mandelson home scandal	*yes*	*negative*	-30,89%
21	*[May 1999]*	Scottish election confusion	*yes*	*negative*	-22,16%
34	*[August 2000]*	school exam fiasco	*yes*	*negative*	-17,81%
36	*[January 2001]*	private party finance scandal	*yes*	*negative*	-11,99%
37	*[January 2001]*	Hindiuja scandal	*yes*	*negative*	-14,61%
38	*[February 2001]*		*yes*	*negative*	-14,61%
40	*[April 2001]*	campaign of apathy and sleaze	*yes*	*negative*	-12,89%

MAIN SOURCES: *Daily Mail, King (2001), Geddes and Tonge (2001), Butler and Kavanagh (2001)*

This section follows the fall in the credibility of national politics in the United Kingdom observed between 1997 and 2001. Coming after a 1992-1997 legislature that had already damaged the reputation of the Parliament and politicians in general through a series of corruption scandals, this period managed to bring the citizens' trust in politics at an even lower level. This is because it betrayed a widespread expectation that alternation in power would improve the behavior of governmental actors. In particular, this section traces the main focusing events that re-oriented the political credibility of British national institutions a negative direction in this period. The data-driven event selection to reveal a series of milestones in the discourse about British national institutions, for all of which the slope for credibility was lower than -10%. While the *Daily Mail* was merciless in its coverage of the many corruption scandals in the first Blair government, the volumes published by *Palgrave*, *Manchester University Press* and *Chatham House* to cover the 2001 election consider the events portrayed in this account just as damaging. Very simply, the *Daily Mail* had covered 'sleaze' during the *Major* government, and kept doing so after 1997. The credibility discourse appears as separate in the media coverage from assessments of the government's performance, which was comparatively more positive, as shown in section 3.2.4.

The graph (6.11) shows how the second half of 1998, the spring/summer of 1999 and the pre-2001-election period, all saw intense negative coverage. On the other side,

Blair's first year and the mid-1999 to mid-2000 period were less negative. Given how eager voters had been to elect a new government in May 1997, *Labour* had initially been given the benefit of the doubt even by conservative publications. This initially lenient judgement was also due to a lack of negative events, even if an anti-politics discourse already existed and could be exploited. As visible in the chart, the first year went by without significant alterations of political credibility in the sample, despite a negative trend. This depended mostly on its low intensity, since only 25% of the articles in the first sample-year were positively coded. The tragic death of Diana Spencer received ample coverage, as the whole country mourned one of the figures that had best represented it for over a decade. The new administration handled those events with tact and sensitivity, and did not waste a good opportunity to some build up some political credibility. Alas, they squandered this initial positive impression before the end of the year.



Then, the end of the year saw what would be only the first of a series of political scandals. Billionaire and *F1* executive Bernie Ecclestone had allegedly funded *Labour*'s campaign in exchange for having a ban on cigarette advertising in Britain lifted for the *Silverstone Grand Prix*. In November *Blair* announced that it was just a coincidence and the money would be returned, but the damage was done.[482] A confused media started asking important questions on issues directly affecting political credibility. Why had there been

[482] Hughes, David "Blair Hands Back Ecclestone Cash in Sleaze Storm" *Daily Mail* 11 Nov. 1997

secrecy in regards to the donation? Why were politicians refusing to comment in its regard?[483] And why try to deny it, once the story had come out? Unfortunately, politicians seemed uninterested in addressing these themes and the media would keep asking these same questions for the whole four years.

The graph shows that early 1998 was negative for the national institutions. This initial change was gradual with a few controversial episodes coming to alter the discourse. Party discipline in Parliament was bringing stability to the new administration, and the only negative news for credibility came from the government. This is when the coverage turned extremely negative for national institutions, with less than one in ten articles carrying a positive evaluation (9%). In March a document was leaked, discussing the idea of letting major donors into *Downing Street* (the Prime Minister's residence) to "*flatter their desire to give advice*", in exchange for cash.[484] In parallel, there seemed to be substance to the press' insinuations that a few rich tycoons had gained privileged access to the government. Rupert Murdoch, owner of *The Sun* and *The Times* and private television mogul, had helped Blair during his rise to power with favorable coverage. Now it seemed like Prime Minister was helping him get a foothold in Italy's media through his good relationship with his Italian PM Romano Prodi, whom he had met in Brussels.[485] A prominent government advisor was also quitting to go work for Murdoch. Legally, had he been a public servant he would have had to wait two years.[486] A June article reported the new government's unusual operations, having hired an army consultants and so-called '*spin doctors*', who costed an extravagant £3.6 million a year.[487] In August 1998, Alastair Campbell was criticized for his lack of democratic sensitivity in handling journalists and activists, marking the first period where negative coverage passed the threshold.

Late in 1998, the first event that represented a huge negative shock to credibility was a corruption scandal that went all the way inside the cabinet. It was especially salient in negatively reconfiguring credibility, but also impacted the fortunes of the *Labour* party as seen in chapter 3. In late November 1998, Treasury Minister Geoffrey Robinson was being investigated for the suspiciously high profits he had made when he was the chairman of Hollis Industries.[488] Specifically, the opposition was calling on Peter Mandelson –

[483] "Anatomy of an Unfolding Scandal" *Daily Mail* 15 Nov. 1997
[484] Eastham, Paul "Tories Want Answers over 'Cash Passport to Downing Street' " *Daily Mail* 30 Mar. 1998
[485] Eastham, Paul "Tories Urge Blair to Come Clean on TV Talks" *Daily Mail* 28 Mar. 1998
[486] Blair press aide quits to join Murdoch's TV empire; ADVISER MAY FACE COMMONS SCRUTINY." *Daily Mail* 20 Apr. 1998
[487] "Blair Spends £3.6m on His Spin Doctors" 13 Jun. 1998
[488] Buckland, Chris "Robinson's Link to Maxwell Deal" *Daily Mail* 30 Nov. 1998

Minister without Portfolio responsible for coordinating with government – to personally take charge of the inquiries. Mandelson was known to the general public under the not-so-flattering nickname of *Prince of Darkness*, which he had received during his tenure as director of communication for *Labour* leader Neil Kinnock in 1985. He had since become Britain's most famous "spin doctor", and after his election to Parliament in 1992 he had been successful as Blair's campaign director in 1997. At the time of the scandal, he was the Secretary for Trade and Industry, and also responsible for the internal coordination of the government. While Tony Blair was tacitly supporting his friends, and the opposition called for Robinson's resignation, the real scandal erupted.

On December 21, 1998 Peter Mandelson revealed the media that he had borrowed £373,000 from Robinson to finance a house purchase.[489] He had failed to disclose the deal when his office started investigating Robinson, but protested his innocence, as he had excluded himself from the inquiry. Given how the loan had come before the 1997 election, it cast a shade over the honesty of a government that had nominated two ministers in existing conflict of interest.[490] Later, it appeared that Mandelson had deceived everybody and no-one inside the cabinet knew about the loan. This allowed the Prime minister to avoid some of the fallout, but the damage to political credibility as a whole was enormous.[491] One year and half into the new legislature, it started to look as if *New Labour* was just as bad as the old *Tories*.

The third sample-year was less dramatic but still negative, with 25% positive discourse on the institutions, and clearly separated in two periods. The first part was more negative, and started when important blow to credibility came in Spring 1999, when the first ever elections for a Scottish Parliament were called. These election coincided with the renewal of all local councils in order to save the public some expenses. This was the first test for the devolution agenda promoted by *Labour* during its campaign, and which involved Scotland, Wales and mayoral elections. Through a September 1997 referendum, both Scotland and Wales had approved the government's plan. A month before the election, the Prime Minister confessed his personal worries that the people did not care and apathy would be the real winner.[492] His prediction proved accurate, when what should have been a celebration of national Scottish pride and autonomy only generated a 59.1% turnout, 12%

489 Hughes, David "MANDELSON IN £373,000 LOAN STORM; Trade Secretary Borrowed Cash from Geoffrey Robinson" *Daily Mail* 22 Dec. 1998
490 "Rules that must be followed." *Daily Mail* 22 Dec. 1998
491 Hughes, David "MASTER OF DECEPTION; How Mandelson Accused of Misleading Everyone over THAT Loan" *Daily Mail* 23 Dec. 1998
492 "Blair in Fear of a Mid-Term Meltdown" *Daily Mail* 4 May 1999

less than Scottish participation in the May 1997 general election, and 15% less than in the November 1997 referendum that had introduced the new institutions.

If a mid-term vote can generally be considered less salient than a general election, a lack enthusiasm towards important political reform hurts political credibility. In particular, the Scottish election had been the first ever to elect some MPs through proportional representation (56 out of 129), and should have worked as a political laboratory and a participatory opening for the whole country. Instead, the presence of two ballots proved to confuse many, including the Scottish National Party's leader Alex Salmond who almost cast his ballot in the wrong box.[493] Simultaneously, voter turnout reached the lowest levels ever in England, where only 26% of the electorate went to elect its local councilors another incredibly negative signal for credibility.[494]

Early 2000 was not especially negative in the sample, but still presented some events that impacted the credibility of national institutions. Remarkably in May a wind of anti-politics sustained the election Ken Livingstone as London mayor.[495] Running as an independent, outside of the main political parties, he received unprecedented support thanks to his own personal popularity. Yet, even his victory came on a low turnout of only one-third of Londoners, which were just as dissatisfied with politics as the rest of the country. As depicted by an editorial, heavyweight politicians from *Labour* and the *Tories* perceived the new local institutions as having too little power in comparison to the responsibility that came with the appointment. As a consequence they were not running for them.[496]

The last sample-year was again shockingly negative, with only 11% of the articles on national institutions seeing them in a positive light. Scottish politics raised to negative prominence in August when the new computer-based school examination systems sent thousands of incorrect *Intermediate* and *High School* certificates. The administration tried to limit the scandal to the local sphere, but given the salience of devolution, disappointment towards higher level bureaucrats rose high. Most alarming was that nobody in the executive took responsibility, let alone Scottish Education Minister Sam Gailbraith.[497] In the same period, a by-election in Tottenham received media coverage because of a climate of apathy

[493]"Confusion reigns as the polls are closed." *Daily Mail* 7 May 1999
[494]Butler, David "Democracy Is the Loser as Victory Goes to the Army of Stay-at-Homes; Commentary" *Daily Mail* 8 May 1999
[495] "Why the Public Is Sick of Politicians" *Daily Mail* 6 May 2000
[496] "A Plague on All Their Houses" *Daily Mail* 4 May 2000
[497] Warner, Gerald "Let's See" *Daily Mail* 21 Aug. 2000

and its especially low turnout.[498] The connection between a lack of accountability and falling political credibility and participation was explicitly traced by the media.[499] In late 2000, several more by-elections of lesser political consequence received commentary relative to credibility and always in a negative sense.

In September 2000 the petrol crisis took Britain by surprise, with protesters blockading highways and picketing oil refineries, bringing the country to a standstill for a few days. The data from the sample did not register these events likely because their coverage used a different cluster of words, and did not involve party politics beyond a series of reassuring speeches given by Tony Blair. King (2001) covered these salient moments, commenting that although the administration knew that high fuel prices were an issue, the demonstrations' spontaneity and large scale had caught it completely off guard. Though the complaints targeted the cost of doing business, which had been rising for two decades, the composition of the protesters was more telling. High fuel prices particularly hit farmers and truckers, and both constituencies had for a long time felt neglected by governments of either partisan affiliation, and were expressing their dissatisfaction. That this protests were not subject to public disapproval, but seen as justified, shows that these interest groups were not actually the only to have lost faith in public institutions.

Political credibility received a final and decisive negative shock during the pre-campaign and campaign periods, when new events emerging. Two political scandals erupted in January 2001, defeating attempts of government control of the media agenda. The main show was the Hinduja brothers scandal, which showed the highest persistency in media reports (King, 2001) and after initial coverage basically took a life of its own for weeks. Once again Peter Mandelson became the target of public indignation. In simple terms, Indian businessman Srichand Hinduja had allegedly helped one of Mandelson's entrepreneurial ventures, and in exchange the Minister had lobbied the Home office to obtain him a UK passport. When the *quid pro quo* emerged, Mandelson first denied it, then, pressured by his own party, he had to admit to improper conduct. To top the whole affair off came the discovery that Hinduja and his brother were under investigation in India for an alleged arms deal linked to a serious case of corruption. Mandelson had spent a year and a half on the Parliamentary back benches after losing his Ministerial post in early 1998, and Tony Blair had personally vouched for him in Autumn 1998 when he became the

[498] Wilson, Greame "Beware the Apathy Vote Labour Warned" *Daily Mail* 24 Jun. 2000
[499] Warner, Gerald "Playing with Fire; the School Exams Fiasco Has Irreparably Damaged Public Confidence in the Scottish Political Process. the Risk Is the People Will Just Walk Away SATURDAY ESSAY" *Daily Mail* 26 Aug. 2000

Secretary for Northern Ireland. When he had to be removed for a second time in early 2001, it directly affected the credibility of the majority cabinet. Meanwhile, the Hinduja scandal kept going because Minister for Europe Keith Vaz, already under fire in 2000 for other cases of corruption, was pulled into the affair for having also tried to procure passports to the same gentlemen.

Coming out in the first days of 2001, the other scandal regarded the discovery that huge financial contributions to the *Labour* party had come just before passing an *anti-sleaze* law, which among other things targeted private financing of parties. At first, the donors' identity remained secret, spurring public indignation.[500] When names started coming out, the narration spun out of control. Well-known publisher Lord Hamlyn spontaneously revealed that he was proud to be one of the donors to whose generosity the *Labour* party owed financial stability after the 1997 public funding cuts.[501] Given how Blair had conferred him his Lord title only three years prior, he embarrassed the government, and opened the door to more criticism of how institutions were run. Businessman Christopher Ondaatje and Minister of Education Lord Sainsbury followed suit, and revealed their contributions only hours before the *Economist* magazine published the whole list.[502] Donors defended their actions by claiming that the Tories had monopolized big donations until a few years prior and there was no scandal. That might have been true, but certainly it did not make national politics more credible in the eyes of Britons, quite the contrary.[503]

As a consequence of the continuing corruption stories, in the last month before the election commentators reported on political apathy, and saw national politics as not credible. A May 9 editorial spelled it out: "*This campaign should be a celebration of a great democratic tradition, when voters are treated as adults by the parties and can make a free and informed choice. But if politicians patronise the public? If genuine debate is sacrificed to stunts and spin? Then the consequences will inevitably be apathy, a lamentably low turnout and a further erosion of democracy.*"[504] Media coverage could be blamed only up to a point. Even Blair's decision to announce the date of the election at a girl's school, planned to make him look like a "man of the people", was the latest attempt to manipulate the public (Geddes & Tonge, 2001). Only days later, he had to postpone the date, amidst protestations from the countryside, where foot-and-

[500] Wilson, Graeme "Who Is Labour's £2m Benefactor? Blair Accused of Dodging His Own Anti-Sleaze Rules" *Daily Mail* 1 Jan. 2001
[501] Wilson, Graeme "Labour's £2million Man Is Unmasked; Publishing Tycoon Lord Hamlyn Goes Public after Party Pressure" *Daily Mail* 3 Jan. 2001
[502] Hughes, David "ANYONE ELSE GIVEN LABOUR £2MILLION?" *Daily Mail* 5 May 2001
[503] Heffer, Simon "Time to Put Sleazy MPs in the Dock" *Daily Mail* 5 May 2001
[504] "Must Apathy Be the Real Winner?" *Daily Mail* 9 May 2001

mouth disease had put pig farmers on their knees.[505] Given how the main pollsters all gave *Labour* a second landslide, some worried about the state of British democracy, because it empowered institutions that looked uninterested in serving the interests of the people.[506] Four years before in 1997, the electorate might still have suspected that the *Tories* had become complacent and had started disrespecting national institutions. In 2001, Britons saw that alternation in power had delegitimized those time-honored institutions. The most tangible outcome of this loss in credibility was a 59.4% turnout, the lowest ever for a British general election.

6.3 – Participation As A Reflection Of Credible Institutions

Political credibility has a different nature from competition-related aspects of political context, having more to do with public opinion. Its measurement can be considered harder, possibly more controversial assessment, with wider possibility for disagreement. After all, a weak opposition will do poorly at the polls, at the very least losing votes in absolute terms if not also in its overall vote share. Since quantitative trends for policy-related and economic evaluations did not show consistency, this chapter depended upon the evaluation of national institutions. Given the exploratory nature of this study, this concept was used to code articles on all sorts of political institutions. Not just parliaments, or electoral institutions, or societal perceptions of politics, but all of them. Yet, this chapter presented clear, uncontroversial evidence of how credibility changed between two elections leading to an *electoral revolution*.

In the positive cases, a public conversation about the deeper nature of the political regime had been opened abruptly during moments of interruption – or questioning – of the Constitutional order. In both instances, France in the 1960s and Honduras in the 2010s, the opposition initially challenged the legitimacy of the regime, and tried to bring the public to take its side. Then, in the course of the four sample-years the discourse changed thanks to the positive intervention of politicians from either side of the majority-opposition divide. The ability to put aside concerns about authoritarianism, and to make politics more

[505] "Moment of Truth for Mr Blair" *Daily Mail* 24 Mar. 2001
[506] "Use Your Vote for Democracy" *Daily Mail* 06 Jun. 2001

inclusive of formations with different ideological and policy agendas was key to the surge in participation observed in these two important elections.

In the negative cases, corruption and disregard for citizens' priorities ran the game. Institutional reforms were either scarcely successful, as in Britain, or widely insufficient to meet the country's needs, as in Costa Rica. Politicians seemed out of ideas as to how to address the public and make coherent choices. They also appeared more busy using politics to their own financial and electoral advantage than to serving their institutional roles. A dismal dynamic in both cases saw the appearance of allegations of corruption, mismanagement on wrongdoing. These initial news were then followed by outrage, a denial of the truthiness of the facts reported, the emergence of more evidence, and the eventual admission, causing embarrassment to a whole political class. Crucially, these events hit both the majority and the opposition, leaving the public unable to judge in a positive way any major party politician at all.

The use of different materials, including opinion polls coming from print media and other secondary sources, alongside the reporting of the most salient events makes for a complete account. Overall, changes in the narrative appear of paramount importance for politics. Especially when positive or negative elements emerge early on, the possibility of a buildup over time should give politicians pause. Also, it is absolutely possible that in the negative cases the political class was no worse than in the positive ones. What made a difference is their handling of specific events, which created or destroyed political credibility. This chapter ends the central section of this work. The conclusion then traces connections between the different trajectories outlined in these last four chapters.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The four previous chapters showed how transformations within different aspects of a country's political context led to expansive and restrictive electoral revolutions across four case studies. As hoped in the theory chapter, the separation between elements linked to the majority, the opposition, the differentiation of the party system and the credibility of political institutions proved to be a useful analytical tool. It allowed to isolate specific aspects within each of these camps that were reconfigured in the wake of focusing events, and which sent the discourse about political credibility and competition on a new track. On the other hand, this separation tends to hide from the reader the obvious interplay between different players and factors.

This conclusive chapter briefly presents the key findings of this research, but also illustrates the connections within and between cases that the previous accounts did not show. It does so by relying once again upon events, and leaning more heavily on categories of events that impacted several different factors at once. In addition to evidence from France, Honduras, Costa Rica and the United Kingdom, the theory is also illustrated in reference to a handful of additional cases. These so-called 'shadow cases' have not been subject to the same lengthy process of qualitative analysis, but allow to present additional evidence in support of the main theoretical contributions of this study. After performing this treatment across the board, the second part of this chapter presents a series of remarks re-evaluating the importance of this project after its completion, suggesting future avenues for research and pointers for policy scholars. Last its generalizability and the scope conditions that apply to it are examined.

Events have been used as the nexus of transformations in a country's political context. In the empirical chapters the accent has been placed upon their impact on the different mechanisms, linked to credibility and competition. Because of the structure of this work imposed a separation between different aspects, some events came up across different chapters. Their recurring presence is due to their impact upon the political context as a whole, affecting the majority, the opposition, party system polarization and institutional credibility. Just like this study's findings rely on patterns that are repeated across cases and that hold up for positive and negative cases alike (with opposite patterns) the following treatment relies upon those events that occurred in different shapes across

the cases. So far, events were categorized based on their impact on turnout, instead here I propose a different typology, based on the events' core characteristics. To offer some fitting examples, a short, non-exhaustive list of such events includes:

- pacts, alliances and coalitions among political parties
- internal divisions within political parties (often clashes between '*old timers'* and *'modernizers'*)
- internal transformations of party organizations, changes in their statute, name, ideological leaning
- institutional reforms that affect the parties and/or the electoral system
- the state of the economy, mainly reflected by GDP growth, inflation, and unemployment
- foreign policy issues related to, for instance, international affiliations, trade, or warfare
- public protests, workers' and students' strikes, social movements
- corruption scandals.

The theoretical chapter (Ch.2) already included some of these event categories, which informed the creation of the theoretical framework and impacted different mechanisms. Others were subsumed into wider, more broadly categorizable groups such as "cohesion of the opposition" which could then be positively or negatively coded. As a matter of fact, event categories are interesting precisely because under different circumstances they can have completely different impacts on the political context and therefore on electoral participation. Yet, the events included in the above list are well-suited for a treatment that looks at different mechanisms simultaneously, allowing for a wider amount of complexity to be tackled. Pacts, alliances and coalitions between political parties, which can also encompass civil society organizations, clearly constitute one such case. The splits, tensions and fissures inside political parties are another. Those who study the political process know how it follows a winding path, marked by negotiations among different actors who often have conflicting goals. The processes described here are no different, except in this case the electorate is often watching and the media tends to follow the evolution of these phenomena as in a blow-by-blow rendition of a sport event. The next two small sections then have the task of dissecting these events as broad categories, and use them to illustrate how the three-pronged theory, based upon changes in the strength/cohesion of the opposition, the ideological polarization of the party system and the credibility of national institutions can work through them.

7.1 – Pacts, Alliances, Coalitions And Participation

Under parliamentarism, pacts, coalitions and electoral alliances, formal and informal, are the bread and butter of party politics. Even if three out of the four countries in these studies are presidential systems, said liaisons have been present in all four empirical chapters. In France, the alliance of the left was the key for the strengthening of the opposition, helped the growing institutional credibility of the *Cinquième Republique*, and it created ideological differentiation by obliging the center-left parties to pick a side. In Honduras, Lobo's decision to go with a government of national unity was fundamental in restoring the country's institutions to legitimacy, initially reduced the ideological space between the two main parties, and left important political spaces for the creation of a brand new opposition. In Costa Rica, the pact between *Liberación* and the *SocialCristianos* was decisive in weakening and internally dividing both the majority and the opposition. In parallel, it reduced the ideological spectrum of national politics, and the two-party failure at a joint policy agenda damaged the party system's credibility. Last, in the United Kingdom, the local alliances between *Labour* and the *Liberal Democrats* weakened the opposition, which had suddenly shrunk, undermined the credibility of institutional reforms that had promised to democratize local government, and reduced polarization by causing the near disappearance of leftist ideology from the party system.

Even just from this brief overview of pacts and alliances, they appear as frequent, uncontroversially important occurrences. Their impact on credibility, competition and voter participation is a complex matter, which deserves a lengthy treatment. Under what conditions can the creation of a new pact, alliance, coalition within the party system bring people out to vote or dissuade them from going to the polls? Although the answer is not univocal, a few salient points can be drawn from the cases, and they are summarized here.

1) alliances within a certain ideological or policy family that allow for the pooling of resources and separate membership bases have potential to strengthen the majority or the opposition;
2) alliances between parties that were fighting each other until only a few months prior are likely to be seen as not credible, and to damage institutional reputation and the parties that stipulate them;
3) combining different political parties raises political stakes, and creates expectations in the general public, making the long-term success of an alliance depend upon delivering on its promises;

4) alliances between stronger and weaker formations generally tend to be unsatisfactory for the smaller party, which often ends up strengthening a weak government. They have the potential to gravely damage opposition politics when happening inside its ranks;
5) the merger into existing (or new) political parties of other membership-based societal organizations is a positive factor for participation as it might attract electorally uninvolved citizens.

The following table (7.1) proposes how interactions between these different elements can influence participation through credibility and competition. Notice that although the outcome is not deterministic and other, contingent factors can determine the final outcome in terms of participation, these pacts had a lot of traction inside the political process of these countries.

TABLE 7.1 – PACTS AND ALLIANCES, INTERACTIVE EFFECTS

	France *Communists and Federation*	**Honduras** *Zelayistas and FNRP*	**Costa Rica** *Liberación and Unidad*	**United Kingdom** *Labour and Liberal Democrats*
compatible ideology?	yes	partially	no	partially
previously fighting?	initially yes, not after 1963	no	yes	no
policy delivery?	at regional level	NA	no	insufficient
balanced strength?	yes	yes	yes	no
includes non-parties?	yes (Convention)	yes (Resistencia)	no	no
process-related outcome	strengthens opposition, increases polarization	strengthens opposition, increases polarization	damages majority, opposition and credibility	damages opposition and polarization
participation effect	positive	positive	negative	negative

7.2 – The Risky Gambles Of Old Timers And Modernizers

Another important aspect that recurs across the empirical cases is a tension, visible inside political parties. It becomes visible in the confrontations between a more traditional wing that is often ideologically committed to a platform, and groups of younger members who are trying to take over the party or at least to steer it in a new direction. Although the opposite is possible, with modernizers trying to bring the party back to its roots, it is a less frequent occurrence. The French *SFIO* Socialists, the Honduran *Partido Liberal*, *Liberación*

Nacional in Costa Rica and the *Labour* party in the United Kingdom were clearly going through dynamics of this kind during the periods examined. Non-coincidentally, the first two cases refer to expansive electoral revolutions and opposition parties, while the other two are relative to the parliamentary majority before restrictive electoral revolutions. Once again, being able to trace a certain typology for the evolution of these dynamics can be of great help for understanding electoral participation in these and other cases. Ideology certainly plays an important role in these dynamics, especially when it is strictly linked to the identity of a certain party and molds the voters expectations regarding its behavior.

Given the scholarly knowledge that – under a psychological point of view –turnout stability works through the establishment of voting habits in a part of the population, there is a price to pay in betraying those old, committed partisans that have formed a political party's backbone for a long time. This is just as valid on either side of the political spectrum, although both of the negative electoral revolution examples examined here refer to the complex transformation of the social democracy during the 90s, after the fall of the Soviet Union. More often than not, if a certain party is rooted in the territory, and the national leadership decides for top-down modernization and catch-all campaigning, it will leave the *party on the ground* behind. This has important repercussions for municipal and regional elections, happening in contexts where the local party chapter still has a say. Similarly, in the party's traditional strongholds, constituency leaders can bargain with the national direction from a position of relative power. In this work, these dynamics were evident in the French municipal elections of early 1965 and in the British local councils renovation in 2000, respectively for the traditional center-right parties (*MRP* and *CNIP*) in France and for *Labour* in the United Kingdom. This also applied to the important role that the capital city mayor Ricardo Álvarez retained within the *Partido Nacional* in Honduras, which even allowed him to support striking teachers and constantly criticize the national government. In all of these cases, the party did respectably in the local elections, but the conflict between a party's base and its leadership damaged it in the national polls. This always shows in the total numbers of votes cast, as a party can keep its percentage share and seats – while losing thousands of votes – when the same thing is happening to other parties as well.

This can have important repercussions on national institutions as a whole, especially when it happens to the party of government, which can find itself paralyzed by a double-agent problem. This kind of problem arises when an ideologically-committed party that traditionally acts as the agent of the party faithful, opens up to become a fully-

fledged catch-all party, which then has to act as the agent of all those that voted its big-tent campaign platform. If a party reaches government on these unclear premises, and is similarly divided internally between modernizers and old timers, its agenda necessarily suffers. For *Liberación Nacional* in Costa Rica, this kind of dynamic created continuous contradictions right from the start. It forced the leadership's hand towards taking some decisions that simultaneously restricted avenues for democracy for the country as a whole, and for the party internally. Nationally, it delayed long-awaited reforms to the electoral system which included the single-term presidency. Internally, it led to the decision to postpone the creation of open party primaries. The last component that intervened in this case was the movement that the party took towards the ideological center, or perhaps even the center-right of the party system. Had *Liberación* not been so internally divided at the beginning of the legislature, President Figueres might have been able to find some internal compromise with his predecessor Óscar Arias and with his party's candidate for 1998, José Miguel Corrales.

The internal dynamics of the *Labour* party in Britain between 1997 and 2001 were strikingly similar, with tensions between old timers and modernizers, a leadership pushing to adopt centrist positions, and the failure of national reforms. In that case, though, the party could count on a large parliamentary majority, a precious ally in the *Liberal Democrats* and no term limits for its leader. Those three elements allowed the majority to gain another term even after such a disastrous legislature. That the outcome, a dramatic fall in voter turnout was the same in 1998 Costa Rica and in 2001 Britain, means that the similarities between these dynamics mattered a great deal for participation.

7.3 – Key takeaways: Reconceptualizing the electoral context

The examples provided in the previous section illustrate how the different components of the theoretical model interact in the reality of a complex social world. This section takes a step back and examines how the findings can be used to recalibrate what we know about the determinants of voter turnout using insight provided by electoral revolutions. The results create a strong case for changing the type of models used, for introducing new variables into studies of voter turnout, and for changing the way that other factors are conceptualized.

First, time-series regression studies and panel-based models seem intuitively more apt to the study of turnout than merely cross-sectional specifications. If turnout changes in response to changes in the political context, an excessive focus on turnout levels obscures the frequent interesting variations that we see in the universe of cases. In particular, the use of country-specific variables that are allowed to change between elections is conducive to models that better approximate reality while remaining parsimonious. Even within a specific country, including elections for different kinds of office (such as Presidential, Parliamentary, regional parliament elections) in the model can multiply the avenues for tracing temporal trajectories. As long as the effects for different elections are kept separate through the use of qualitative variables, they can be employed jointly.

Concerning new variables, the chapters focused upon changes in party system polarization and the credibility of political institutions suggest that these factors have much weight in shaping turnout decisions. Quantitative models should make an effort to incorporate measures of ideological polarization and policy placements of different political parties and formations, and to explore their interaction with the performance of said parties. Concerning credibility, the use of opinion polls that follow the approval ratings for different institutions can be a powerful tool for better understanding which branches of the state carry the most weight in voters' decisions. In both of these cases, reliance upon events coverage can capture the discourse-related nature of these factors.

Last, and perhaps most important, this study successfully challenges the current conceptualization of political competition. Voting percentages and margins of victory are as used proxies for competition in regression models of voter turnout. Given how they only measure the relative and not absolute strength of a political party or coalition, their use is of limited utility in periods of transformation, when, for example, all parties become weaker during a legislature (something observed in the Costa Rican and British cases from this dissertation). Instead, evaluations of party performance during a term can be performed separately from electoral results, by using media coverage, opinion polls and the like. In addition, when looking at elections as a race between two or more competitors, this study's results show that the performance of the majority is not as important as the opposition's in determining turnout outcomes. In other words, it is the strength and cohesion opposition that ultimately determines whether a certain election is competitive or not.

The unprecedented fall of voter turnout observed in Cyprus over the course of three consecutive elections, with two negative electoral revolutions in a row, is perfectly suited for showing the role of political competition in a new sense. In 2006 Cyprus held its last high-turnout (89%) Parliamentary election. At the time, the government was in the hands of a majority coalition between the Communist *AKEL*[507] and centrist *DIKO*[508] parties, which had already supported president Papadopoulos in 2003, and would support Christofias' election in 2008. The majority poorly managed the coming of the economic crisis and the financial scandals that hit the country after 2008. In parallel, the negotiation with international institutions shrank the ideological space at disposition for economic reforms, as all parties would have probably acted in a similar way during this phase. The main opposition party *DISY*[509] was not a viable option, which led to a loss of support for all major parties in the 2011 legislative elections, where voter turnout fell to 78.7%.

Three months after the 2011 Legislative election, *DIKO* dropped out of the government coalition, putting *AKEL* and the Christofias presidency in a minority position. In 2013, the center-right opposition took the presidency with Anastasiades (*DISY*), and the media then expected it to easily win the 2016 legislative elections. But then the party split internally, over different opinions concerning the settlement of the Cypriot conflict, leading to the foundation of the *Solidarity Movement*[510] party which gathered a crucial 5% in 2016. With the majority and the opposition camps being both divided and weak, competition fell to unprecedented low levels, the 2016 election was a second negative electoral revolution in a row, with voter turnout going down to 66.7%.

Why is it important to look at events in the context of Cyprus? This is because it would be very hard to predict what could have possibly led to these catastrophic falls in turnout by just looking at voting shares. Since normally competition is conceptualized through the margin of victory of the party or candidate that gets the most votes, and *AKEL* and *DIKO*'s combined vote shares actually fell from 50% to 48% between 2006 and 2011, one could have expected turnout to grow. Instead it fell by over 10% of registered voters. Similarly, in 2016 the majority lost power, as new small parties gained ground to the detriment of the major parties and turnout could have been expected to grow. Yet, it fell by an additional 11%. This is because the fragmentation of the party system was not a signal of growing competition, but only of internal disagreement over important policy

[507] *Ανορθωτικό Κόμμα Εργαζόμενου Λαού* (*ΑΚΕΛ*), *Progressive Party of the Working People*
[508] *Δημοκρατικό Κόμμα* (*ΔΗΚΟ*), *Democratic Party*
[509] *Δημοκρατικός Συναγερμός* (*ΔΗΣΥ*), *Democratic Rally*
[510] *Κίνημα Αλληλεγγύη*

decisions. In practice, it made the party system more complex and confusing. The 2016 was also notable for the widespread apathy and disillusion towards all political parties observed by journalists and scholars, in a falling credibility pattern that by now should sound very familiar.

7.4 – Generalizability and Scope Conditions

Given how a composite theory held for the four cases examined in this study, the results can be considered generalizable to a broader array of elections. Overall, the insight regarding electoral revolutions should then be valid under the normal conditions of democracy where there is a certain degree of competition between political parties. Where these findings are bound not to apply is then where democracy is interrupted by a long period of dictatorship, even if the reprise of liberal institutions is done by the same or a very similar party system. Therefore, it should not apply to the so-called founding elections that took place across Eastern Europe, Latin America and many African and Asian nations across the 1980s and 1990s.

7.5 – Policy implications

Although in a strict sense this dissertation does not belong to the sub-field of public policy, it borrowed from it an empirical and methodological approach focused upon transforming temporal processes over static variables. In addition, the results of this work have repercussions on the study of public policy, concerning its relationship with elections and voter participation. On the one hand, the importance of institutional credibility for citizens' participation in the electoral process points to a strong link between reform agendas and voter turnout. Failed institutional reforms can be costly not only for the party in government – which will be punished by losing votes – but for a country as a whole, as they can undermine the whole political system. Lack of reforms that are broadly considered necessary can be extremely costly, and politicians should consider very carefully before delaying or avoiding the necessary steps to reform.

Beyond the four cases examined in this analysis, the Chilean election of 2013 offers a clear example of how institutional reforms and voter turnout are linked. For years, the Chilean people had been making pressure on the institutions for an electoral reform that would get rid of the binomial system. The system was a legacy of authoritarianism in that it had allowed the country's military elites to keep some power after the transition to democracy. Politicians of the majority promised the reform several time during the course of the legislature, but never concretized it in full. Instead, they voted an alternative project which removed compulsory voting, which had the effect of expanding the electoral registries to the whole population. Crucially, no mass campaign of information targeted to the general public was set up to integrate new voters into the existing system. The Chileans' response was overwhelmingly negative. Despite the addition of 5 million citizens to the voter lists, the number of votes cast actually fell by 600,000 voters. In percentage terms, turnout fell by a staggering 35% of eligible voters.

In addition to casting light on the implication of failed reforms, this work has implications that directly impact electoral policy. For example, it provides strong evidence of the importance for turnout of lowering barriers to the entrance of new parties within established party systems. Behind negative electoral revolutions lied closed electoral systems, and steep requirements for the creation of new, nationally viable political parties.

In Costa Rica, the advantage in resources and membership that the two main parties held over the rest of the party system delayed a necessary transition, something that would only happen after the participatory catastrophe of the 1998 election. In the United Kingdom, the first past the post system resulted in a massive amount of wasted votes once the two-party hegemony was broken. *New Labour* could have pushed for the adoption of a proportional representation system, which would have opened the British party system once and for all, but chose not to do so. Instead it contented itself to win parliamentary majorities for three consecutive terms, through a declining plurality of votes – 43.2% in 1997, 40.7% in 2001, 35.2% in 2005. In Honduras and France, on the other hand, the opposition's growth benefited from the extreme fluidity of the party systems, and led to massive increases in participation. In Honduras this transformation happened thanks to reasonable requirements for the creation of new political parties, and to the lifting of the *de facto* veto power of the two main parties under international pressures. In France, the stalemate between political parties was broken by direct Presidential elections and also overcome by the club politiques, which produced the main opposition Presidential

candidate for 1965. They also had a fundamental role in the 1967 leftist alliance through the Convention (which contributed to the formation of the *Parti Socialiste* in 1969).

From this brief examination one can attempt to make a few suggestions regarding how to better regulate electoral systems and political parties, including – and beyond – low barriers to entry:

- PR representation systems do not increase turnout *per se*, but adopting more proportional electoral rules can open party systems up and lead to increasing participation;
- similarly under PR and party system fragmentation with regional variations, adopting majoritarianism encourages alliances and coalitions that increase party systems' legibility;
- public campaign finance should disproportionately favor smaller parties;
- if high turnout is a desirable outcome, then the institutionalization of social movements and non-partisan political organizations is fundamental to the future viability of democracy;
- national-level regulation that clarifies the role of party members can eliminate misunderstandings and tensions inside parties, leading to clearer competition and increased credibility;
- similarly, transparent campaign finance regulations concerning private donations are necessary to increase the transparency of political institutions and to improve their societal perceptions;
- the investigation of MPs accused of crimes should be straightforward, as any form of immunity contributes to suspects which the media naturally fuel;
- lower-level campaigns can improve perceptions of politics. If the electorate is only targeted for national elections, rising issues can easily delegitimize the process.

7.6 – Prospects for future research

Last, but just as important as the rest of these conclusions, come some remarks concerning future directions for research. As an exploratory study, this work is only a first attempt at conceptualizing electoral revolutions in the specific, and changing voter turnout variations more generally. Given that this work is focused on national-level parliamentary

elections in Western Europe and Latin America, the first obvious application would be to less institutionalized democratic contexts, be it municipal elections or elections in younger, more precarious and fluid party systems. Except for cases of electoral fraud, the theory can provide some important insight in understanding the dynamic of turnout in such contexts by directing the researcher to specific aspects linked to the opposition, institutional credibility and ideological differentiation.

Other elections can be explored using insight from this work. For example, one appropriate extension would be so-called founding elections, the first open partisan elections in a country, either tout court, or after an interruption of democratic order. The elections across Central and Eastern Europe of 1989-91 are one notorious example of this kind of phenomenon. They are pertinent to this study because they usually saw high turnout, high credibility, and high competition. This was because of the democratic recovery and high stakes attached to the political process. The following election then tended to follow a dismal pattern, with sharp drops in voter turnout often reflecting a sudden disillusion towards democracy, as people exercised their newly acquired right not to vote. The theory elaborated in this study is then useful to try and arbitrate between outcomes observed in different cases. Not all countries saw as sharp of a fall in voter turnout, and as we know from previous research, countries that allowed the former Communist party to reform and become a social-democratic formation (Grzymała-Busse, 2007) stabilized into democracies more quickly. Therefore, wherever the ex-Communists lost the first election, but maintained a speckle of credibility that actually allowed them to return to power, the opposition's strength and cohesion should be salient to voter turnout.

Another possibility for future research regards municipal elections. Part of what makes them an appealing option for expanding on this work's findings is their existence in a semi-partisan political space. Although the main national political parties often compete to elect mayors in any country's larger cities, there are other, situational components that intervene to alter the mix. One example is the frequent appearance of independent candidates, both to party primaries and to mayoral elections proper. The lower barriers to entry that the smaller-scale campaigns for mayor present constitute an important advantage to those who want to create or consolidate a local center of power. Another example are civic platforms, which can support the candidacies of a mayor and a slate council representatives, either alone, or joining forces with political parties. Their appearance and disappearance makes urban politics much more fluid than national politics' institutionalized realities. These examples only form one side of the equation, that of the political offer. Concentrating

instead on mayoral turnout, it is a promising avenue for future research because it is currently a non-topic in comparative political science. Outside of American politics, no major studies tackle mayoral turnout on a comparative scale, not even for cities with millions of potential voters. In this sense, the discipline is biased towards national politics, or state politics, or social movements, even when they involve lower numbers of voters than many mayoral elections. Because of this gap in the literature, there are ample margins to perform both quantitative and qualitative work on the topic.

Beyond fully democratic elections, some of this study's findings have already inspired an article dealing with *restrictive electoral revolutions* in Central Asia and the Caucasus (Lioy and Dawson, 2020). The article points to the important role of the opposition for authoritarian and hybrid-regime turnout in polities where the government does not artificially inflate turnout to 100%. This recent publication suggests that there is room to explore how far the concepts from this study can be expanded, and can actually provide some guidelines for detecting electoral fraud. For example, between two districts where the president's party obtained large majorities, if there is a large deviation in voter turnout in comparison to the previous election in only one of the two districts, then it is likely to have been the locus of electoral fraud. This is because the higher turnout district was potentially one where the opposition was more competitive and ballot box stuffing went on, to inflate turnout even further, and benefit the government.

This work's methodological approach can potentially be further expanded, and partially or fully automatized over time. The manually coded material that constituted the backbone of this study can serve as basis for machine learning, a process to teach a piece of software how to recognize articles coded for a certain mechanism. Perhaps one barrier in this sense is the use of different languages, and the use of different words in different countries within the same language, but one that can be overcome by increasing the sample size of the source material. For those mechanisms where the coding seemed to provide an ill fit to the material, the coding can be reworked by using samples of articles covering those specific issues (such as public protests). Was something overlooked because of the coding? Would a different coding been more appropriate? These all become fair questions once the attention shifts from the factors that showed consistency to those that fell flat.

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