

# Democracy in Honduras

Political Values and Civic Engagement in 2011

Democracy in Honduras

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for International Affairs



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**Democracy in Honduras:  
Political Values and Civic Engagement in 2011**

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Neil Nevitte/NDI/*Hagamos Democracia*

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The Honduras study is the result of a joint partnership between NDI and *Hagamos Democracia* (HD), an important Honduran consortium of civil society organizations. NDI was fortunate to be able to collaborate with Father German Felix, Executive Secretary of the HD member organization, *Pastoral Social Cáritas Honduras*.

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## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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## **PREFACE**

### *The National Democratic Institute in Honduras*

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization working to support and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide through citizen participation, openness and accountability in government. NDI assists governments, political parties and civil society organizations in developing inclusive and transparent internal processes and generating collective action to consolidate democratic gains. The Institute has worked in approximately 70 countries since its founding in 1983.

NDI opened a field office in Honduras in April 2011 to promote reconciliation in the wake of the 2009 coup; enhance opportunities for the disaffected and traditionally disenfranchised to participate in politics; assist political parties in becoming more internally democratic; and empower a new generation of young leaders from all walks of life.

### *Honduras: a Society that Doubts Its Democracy*

Polling data, columnists, academics, and people on the street agree: Honduras is a society that doubts its democracy, is unhappy with its economy and frustrated by persistent inequality.

The data are clear. Support for democracy in Honduras is just 53 percent, eight percentage points lower than the Latin American average of 61 percent.<sup>1</sup> Only 35 percent of Hondurans are satisfied with their democracy, well below the Latin American average of 44 percent satisfaction. Polls show that Hondurans also view the era of military leadership more favorably (31 percent) than other Latin Americans do (19 percent). Perhaps Hondurans are nostalgic for a mythical era of order and security, or supported the social reformism of certain Honduran military regimes.

The first “democratic dialogues” organized by NDI in La Ceiba, San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa highlighted some of the reasons for Hondurans’ discontent with democracy. Participants described their democracy as functioning like an oligarchy, with decisions made in restricted circles, public institutions plagued by corruption and government jobs treated as political spoils, limited rule of law, and rampant clientelism in primary campaigns. These were not the voices of those who are “anti-politics,” but rather of political leaders--coming from a range of political parties and leanings--who are conscious of public unrest. Despite their differing backgrounds, intellectuals, union representatives, civil society leaders, religious authorities, and journalists offer the same diagnosis.

Hondurans’ dissatisfaction with democracy has roots in socioeconomic problems as well as political ones. Poverty has been reduced, but the decline has been slow and today there are still large segments of the population facing serious economic hardship, particularly in rural areas. At the same time, the wealth gap remains large, and the concentration of wealth and oligarchic structure of various sectors of society are visible stains. For this reason, more Hondurans believe democracy allows for persistent inequality (55 percent) than do Latin Americans in general (48 percent). Even more worrisome for democracy, 63 percent agree that an authoritarian regime would resolve economic problems, compared to 53 percent in the rest of the region.

Beyond these feelings of discontent, Hondurans sense that it is not worth pursuing changes through institutional channels. Indeed, only 45 percent of Hondurans believe that voting is the most effective way to bring about change (compared to 59 percent of Latin Americans), and Hondurans are above the Latin American average in believing that protest is the best way to bring about change (20 percent and 16 percent respectively). The gravest sentiment is a widespread sense of fatalism: 21 percent of Hondurans believe that they are incapable of influencing change compared to 14 percent of Latin Americans. The combination of protest and withdrawal is, to paraphrase Albert Hirschmann, one of the principal challenges to democracy in Honduras.

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<sup>1</sup> The majority of the data comparing Honduras and Latin America come from the Latinobarómetro reports from 2009 and 2010. Data available at: [www.latinobarometro.org](http://www.latinobarometro.org).

The Honduran landscape is not completely shrouded in shadows, however. Citizens increasingly recognize that politics are important: interest in politics has grown steadily from 30 percent in 2006 to 40 percent in 2010. Additionally, confidence in the fairness of elections has risen to 55 percent. After Honduras experienced the sharpest break in the constitutional order of any Latin American country in recent years with the 2009 *coup d'état*, only 30 percent of Hondurans support the idea of a military coup, among the lowest levels of support in the region.<sup>2</sup>

The crisis that began in 2009 places Honduras in an inflection point of history. On the one hand, the structural factors that precipitated the break in constitutional order remain unchanged. As such, the risk of a new conflict has not gone away. On the other hand, most of the country's political leadership recognizes the critical state of the country at present as well as the need to conduct reforms. Therefore, perhaps the central question in Honduras is not whether there should or should not be reforms, but instead what reforms, in which direction and to what degree.

### *Declining Civic Engagement*

Across Latin America, political participation is declining, from 75 percent between 1988 and 1991 to 60 percent during the "electoral marathon" of 2005-2006.<sup>3</sup> Honduras has not escaped this trend. Voting rates have steadily declined, from almost 85 percent in 1985 to just 50 percent in 2009.

Between 1985 and 2009, the number of voters in Honduras grew 43 percent, from 1.6 million<sup>4</sup> to 2.3 million.<sup>5</sup> Neighboring countries, however, managed larger gains: in Nicaragua, the number rose from 1.4 million to 2.4 million (an increase of 72 percent) over the same period; in Guatemala, the voter rolls rose from 1.6 to 2.8 million (an increase of 74 percent); and in El Salvador, they grew from one million to 2.6 million (an astonishing increase of 165 percent). In 1985, Honduras had more registered voters than Nicaragua or El Salvador; today it has fewer than either of its neighbors. It is clear that the political system in Honduras lacks the capacity to successfully incorporate new voters. This is an Achilles heel limiting democratic consolidation in Honduras.

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<sup>2</sup> Figures from Mitchell Seligson (Ed.), José René Argueta and Orlando Pérez, *Cultura política de la democracia en Honduras 2010*. Tegucigalpa: Vanderbilt University, FOPRIDEH, and Hagamos Democracia, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Figures from Centro de Asesoramiento y Promoción Electoral (CAPEL), *Elecciones, democracia y derechos humanos en las Américas*. San José: IIDH – CAPEL, 2007, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Honduras (*Tribunal Supremo Electoral*). Electoral Statistics and Processes: 1985 Elections. 26 Jan 2007. Raw data.

<sup>5</sup> Supreme Electoral Tribunal. Electoral Statistics and Processes: 2009 General Elections. 20 Dec 2009. Raw data.



Geographically, civic engagement is unevenly distributed. The western departments, the poorest in the country and home to a greater share of indigenous people, have the highest levels of voter participation, which was over 55 percent in Intibuca, La Paz, Ocotepeque and Lempira in the 2009 presidential elections.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, the urban and industrial departments in the north have the lowest levels of participation: under 40 percent in Colon, Yoro, and Cortes. If there is a political explanation for these figures, the Liberal bastions of the coast mobilized fewer voters in 2009, this distribution map is from before the presidential election and corresponds to what Willibald Sonnleitner defines as the “Honduran paradox:” less developed regions have greater turnout because it is easier to operate clientelistic networks there than in the country’s more complex urban environments.<sup>7</sup>

### *Exploring Civic Engagement in Honduras: The Role of Research*

The skepticism Hondurans feel toward their democracy that is reflected in declining levels of participation underlie NDI’s decision to carry out a quantitative investigation, based on a representative poll of voting-age Hondurans, of political and electoral participation. The investigation was completed in partnership with We Make Democracy (*Hagamos Democracia*, HD), an effective and well- respected network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) consisting of the Caritas Social Ministry-Honduras (*Pastoral Social Caritas – Honduras*), the Metropolitan University of Honduras (*Universidad Metropolitana de Honduras*), the Federation of NGOs for Honduran Development (*Federación de Organizaciones No Gubernamentales para el Desarrollo de Honduras*, FOPRIDEH) and the Evangelic Fraternity of Honduras (*Confraternidad Evangélica de Honduras*, CEH). NDI’s extended partnership with We Make Democracy began during the 2008 and 2009 presidential elections, in which NDI helped HD build a domestic election observation network and sponsored an accompanying international study mission<sup>8</sup>.

The collection of data for this report took place in January and February 2011. Dr. Neil Nevitte, a renowned political scientist at the University of Toronto, was in charge of data analysis. Dr. Nevitte has extensive international experience and had studied the results of similar studies conducted in El Salvador and Nicaragua. Consequently, this book not only provides information on Honduras, but also a comparative look at the Central American region. This is the first of its many merits.

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<sup>6</sup>Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Honduras. [<http://www.tse.hn>]

<sup>7</sup>WillibaldSonnleitner, *Explorando los territorios del voto: hacia un atlas electoral de Centroamérica*. Centro de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos (CEMCA), Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID), Instituto de Altos Estudios de América Latina (IHEAL). Guatemala: 2006.

<sup>8</sup> National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, *2009 Honduran General Elections: Final Report, International Election Assessment Mission*. Washington, DC: 2010. Available at <http://www.ndi.org/node/16060>.

The research starts with a study on the public perception of democracy and support for democratic procedures and values. The results highlight the limits of such citizen support, linked, undoubtedly, to unsatisfactory economic performance.

The study then examines citizen confidence in institutions. The country's general confidence profile resembles other countries in the region, with religious institutions, mayors and municipal governments and the media inspiring the highest levels of confidence. However, the extremely low support for institutions in general is surprising. None of the institutions reach 50 percent or more total confidence among the polled citizens. This is worrisome, indicating how much distance separates Hondurans from their institutions. Political parties occupy one of the lowest positions on the list; they lack public confidence and Hondurans are open to exploring alternatives in upcoming elections.

The next section demonstrates that Hondurans have a tendency, stronger than in other countries, to engage in collective activities. This participation in public life constitutes one of the main areas for optimism in Honduran society, and without a doubt, it will be one of the fundamental drivers of politics in the years to come.

The fourth section of the report describes the sociological profile of voters and those who abstain. Typically the sectors best integrated into society are also those who participate most: adults who earn more and are interested in politics. There are two figures worth noting. On the one hand, Honduras is part of the trend of rising women's political participation. Honduran women now form a majority of the voter lists and of voter turnout for elections<sup>9</sup>. On the other hand, Honduras reflects the electoral alienation of youth due to problems obtaining proper identification (one of the challenges that needs to be addressed across the country) and to apathy.

Some of the results validate the hypothesis that the fractured Liberal electorate helped propel Nationalist candidate Porfirio Lobo to the presidency because Liberal party candidate Elvin Santos was unable to garner the support of the full bloc that backed ex-president Manuel Zelaya. Despite Honduras's tradition of two party dominance, the study shows that voters from both parties are open to consider new options in future elections.

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<sup>9</sup>Salvador Romero Ballivián, "Participación e inclusión política en América Latina: una perspectiva desde el retorno a la democracia hasta los inicios del siglo XXI" in *Participación política e inclusión*. Centro de Asesoramiento y Promoción Electoral (CAPEL). San José: 2010, 326-327.

The sixth section demonstrates the sharply negative effect that being directly exposed to acts of corruption has on confidence in institutions and support for democracy. The poll also demonstrates the public's openness to constitutional reform, but not to allowing presidential re-election. Attitudes toward constitutional reform or a Constituent Assembly will have important ramifications in the immediate future, as all actors will take positions on this topic of increasing importance to the public agenda.

This study is freely available to all Honduran political and social actors, including the media, domestic scholars and researchers, and all citizens. This open text invites reflection and debate, analysis and action. It stands as a testimony to NDI's commitment to strengthening inclusive, participatory, transparent, and tolerant democratic governance in Honduras.

*Tegucigalpa, 21 July 2011*

Salvador Romero Ballivián  
NDI Honduras Resident Director

## **INTRODUCTION**

With local civic partners NDI has conducted democracy benchmark surveys in a number of Central American countries since 2005. These surveys provide systematic and reliable data about citizens' orientations to democracy, and about how citizens evaluate different aspects of their political environment. Those data are not only useful diagnostic and policy tools, but they also make it possible to identify quite precisely where democratic practices and values are strong and where they are weak. And with systematic cross-time evidence, it becomes possible to track what changes have taken place, where progress has been made and where it has not.

This report presents the findings from the first Honduras benchmark democracy survey. The survey was conducted a year after President Porfirio Lobo assumed office and 18 months after President Manuel Zelaya was forcibly removed from office. The core questions asked in this survey are identical to those asked in other benchmark surveys undertaken in the region. And so, it is possible to place the findings from the Honduras survey in their regional context. As with the other surveys, the Honduran data come from a stratified random sample of Honduran citizens 18 years and older. The sample was designed to be representative of the Honduran population. The sample frame is summarized in Appendix I, and the data provide reliable estimates of the population characteristics to +/- 5%, 95 percent of the time. The field work for the project was undertaken between January 15 and February 8, 2011.

The primary focus of the report concerns how citizens' democratic values, evaluations and outlooks are distributed across different segments of the Honduran public. The report is organized into six parts. The first is concerned with orientations towards democracy. Transitions to democracy, and democratic consolidations, cannot succeed without public support for key democratic principles and values. Two key findings emerge from that analysis.

First, support for democratic procedural norms does not run very deep. Slightly fewer than one in three Hondurans support these democratic principles. Second, support for these democratic principles is clearly concentrated in two specific segments of the public: the young, and those with the highest levels of education. Significantly, however, a substantial majority (62%) of Hondurans with the highest level of formal education do not endorse these democratic principles.

The second part of the report focuses on confidence in institutions and the central finding to emerge here is that Hondurans express very little confidence in such key representative institutions as political parties and Congress. The third part of the report which concerns engagement indicates that, by regional standards, Hondurans are relatively engaged in their community life. But these patterns of engagement are leavened by high levels of cynicism and distrust.

Voting is an important feature of engagement in democracies and here the data indicate that levels of voter turnout in Honduras are comparable to those found in the rest of the region. Perhaps the most troubling finding reported in part four, however, is that young people are significantly less likely to vote than their older counterparts despite the fact that they have higher levels of education and are as knowledgeable about politics. More troubling still, young people were nearly three times more likely than their older counterparts to indicate that they did not vote because they did not have identification documents. This is a substantial barrier to democratic participation.

Part five reveals several findings about how Hondurans feel about their political parties and the leaders of those parties. Most Hondurans are profoundly indifferent to their political parties and leaders. Even partisans who supported the two major parties in the 2009 election have weak attachments to those parties; about half indicated that they would be prepared to vote for a new party should one emerge. And the leader ratings indicate significant asymmetries in the drawing power of party leaders: President Lobo scores 43.3, former presidential candidate Elvin Santos scores 25.8, and former President Zelaya scores 41.2.

The final substantive section focuses on some aspects of the Honduran political environment that are unique to that country. The benchmark survey probed the issue of corruption. The findings, once again, are troubling. About one in five Hondurans reported that paying a bribe was “sometimes justifiable”, and nearly half of all respondents reported that they, personally, had been asked for a bribe. Firsthand experience with bribery is corrosive; it depresses public confidence in key governmental institutions and feeds cynicism. When it

comes to the issues of Presidential re-election and constitutional change, Hondurans are deeply divided. And they are profoundly divided, polarized, in their views about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The concluding discussion addresses some of the implications of these findings.

## Findings

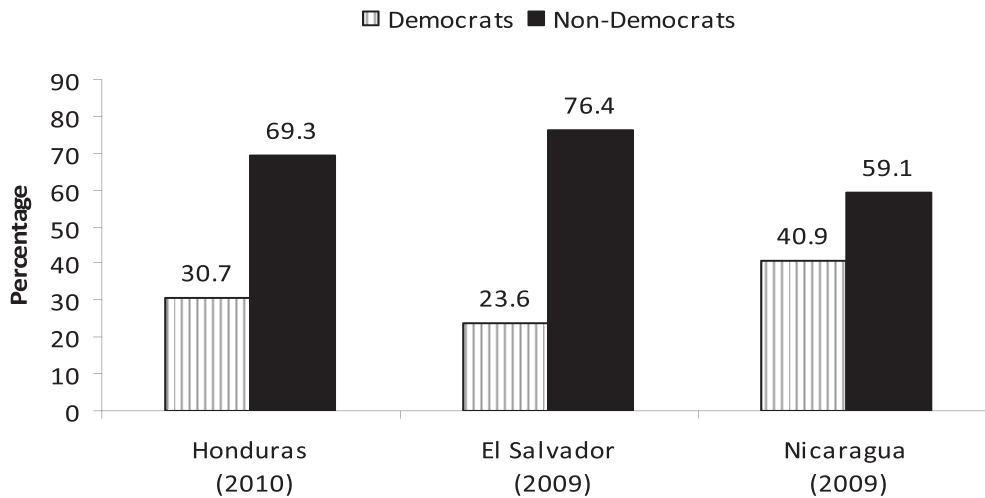
### I. Views about Democracy

The democracy benchmark surveys include batteries of questions designed to probe different dimensions of citizens' views about democracy. Some focus on support for specific democratic procedural norms. Others probe core democratic values. And yet others tap perceptions about how democracies work. Responses to these questions reveal where support for democratic outlooks is strong and where it is weak. Orientations towards democracy are critical not least of all because without substantial citizen support for basic democratic values it becomes difficult for any country to make a successful transition to democracy or to sustain and consolidate democratic practices and institutions (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005).

#### Support for Democratic Procedural Norms

The benchmark surveys begin by asking respondents four questions that probe people's preferences about how they think the country should be governed. These focus on preferences about the relationships between citizens and the state. Respondents were presented with three statements about non-democratic governance options: "*The best system for ruling the country is...*(1) "*having a strong leader without elections or Congress*"; (2) "*having the army rule*"; and (3) allowing "*expert decision makers to do what they think is best*". Respondents who disagreed with these three alternatives are coded as supporting democratic procedural norms as are those who agreed with the statement: "*Having a democratic political system*".

The results, summarized in Figure I-1, capture the big picture; they place the Honduras results in regional context. Thirty-one percent of those interviewed support democratic norms, while 69% do not. Exactly the same statements were put to random samples of citizens in the El Salvador and Nicaragua benchmark surveys in 2009 and so the results from the three surveys are directly comparable. The central finding is clear: Support for democratic procedural norms is significantly higher in Honduras (31%) than in El Salvador (24%). But it is significantly lower than that found in Nicaragua (41%). The central substantive point emerging from these responses is that non-democrats in Honduras outnumber democrats by a huge margin, by a ratio of more than two to one.



**Figure I-1. Support for Democratic Procedural Democratic Norms**

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey; 2009 El Salvador Benchmark Democracy Survey; 2009 Nicaraguan Democracy Survey.

The questions included in the democratic procedural norms scale are:

*I'd Like to know your opinion about what the best system to rule our country is:*

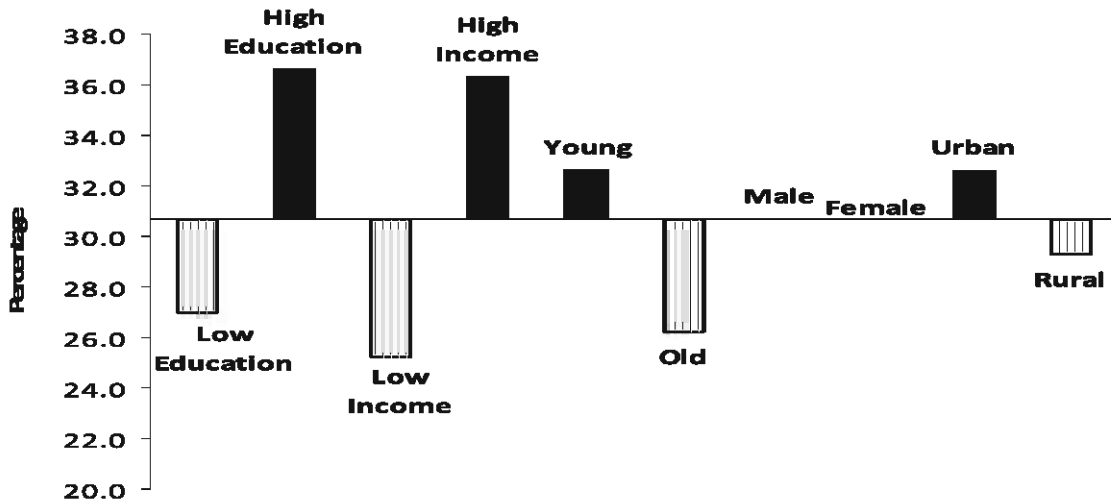
1. *Having a strong leader who rules with no elections or congress*  
(Strongly disagree/disagree=1, democrat; Strongly Agree/Agree=0, non-democrat)
2. *Having expert decision making who act following what they think is best*  
(Strongly disagree/disagree=1, democrat; Strongly Agree/Agree=0, non-democrat)
3. *Having the army ruling the country*  
(Strongly disagree/disagree=1, democrat; Strongly Agree/Agree=0, non-democrat)
4. *Having a democratic political system*  
(Strongly disagree/disagree=0, non-democrat; Strongly Agree/Agree=1, democrat)

Non-democrats = those who score 0-3 on the scale. Democrats = those who score 4.

Where in Honduran society is support for the democratic procedural norms strong? And where is it weak?

One expectation, coming from empirical research in multiple countries, is that people with high levels of formal education will be significantly more likely than their less well-educated counterparts to support these democratic norms (Verba, Nie and Kim 1978). And the data, summarized in Figure I-2, support that expectation. Notice that education, income, age and





**Figure I-2. Support for Procedural Democracy**

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey

Note: The data are centered around the average level of support for democratic procedural norms and they identify where democratic values are stronger and where they are weaker across different sociodemographic groups.

place of residence are all in positive territory: People with higher levels of education (37%) and income (36%), as well as the young (32%), and those who live in urban settings (32%) are more likely than their lower education, lower income, older and rural counterparts to support procedural democracy. Education and age turn out to be particularly important. Notice that gender hardly matters at all.

### Support for Democratic Values

Support for democratic procedural norms is a necessary condition for achieving successful democratic transitions. But support for democratic procedures cannot work in isolation; to be effective it needs to be complemented by other democratic orientations including values that guide day-to-day actions of citizens. Indeed, support for democratic procedures is hollow in the absence of such other supporting democratic values as the belief in equality, freedom of expression and association, equality before the law, and tolerance towards outgroups.

As in El Salvador and Nicaragua, the Honduras benchmark survey probed levels of public support for three particular democratic values: (1) Individual responsibility; (2) equality; and (3) tolerance of others. Respondents were presented with three statements; they were then

asked if they agreed or disagreed with those statements. Individual responsibility is measured by responses to the statement: *“People who don’t get ahead should blame themselves, not society”*. Equality orientations are probed with respondents’ reactions to a statement about gender equality: *“Men make better leaders than women”*. And tolerance is measured by responses to a challenging statement about homosexuality: *“Homosexuals should not hold public office”*.

The basic results are summarized in Table I-1. Support for the value of individual responsibility is similarly high for those persons with democratic convictions (71%) as for those without (73%); there is also little difference between men and women, or among different levels of education. Once again, the Honduras findings can be compared directly with the data from the El Salvador and Nicaragua benchmark surveys. Clearly, support for individual responsibility is significantly higher in Honduras (71%) than in either El Salvador (63%) or Nicaragua (65%).

**Table I-1. Support for Democratic Values**

	Honduras (2010)	El Salvador (2009)	Nicaragua (2009)
<b>Individual Responsibility</b>			
Support	71.3%	63.2%	64.9%
Opposes	28.7	36.8	35.1
N	(1,109)	(1,003)	(1,125)
<b>Gender Equality</b>			
Support	68.2	75.4	77.6
Opposes	31.8	24.6	22.4
N	(1,117)	(994)	(1,148)
<b>Tolerance</b>			
Support	59.7	50.5	60.0
Opposes	40.3	49.5	40.0
N	(1,078)	(982)	(1,011)

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey; 2009 El Salvador Benchmark Democracy Survey; 2009 Nicaraguan Democracy Survey

Question: *I am going to read to you some of the things people say about politicians, the government, or about other people. For each statement, I would like you to tell me if you very much agree, just agree, disagree, or totally disagree.*

1. Individual Responsibility (Support): *“People who don’t get ahead should blame themselves, not society.”* (Percentage saying that they “very much agree”, or “agree” with the statement)
2. Equality (Support): *“Men make better leaders than women.”* (Percentage saying that they “very much disagree”, or “disagree” with the statement)
3. Tolerance (Support): *“Homosexuals should not hold public office.”* (Percentage saying that they “very much disagree”, or “disagree” with the statement)

But support for gender equality is significantly lower in Honduras (68%) than in either El Salvador (75%) or Nicaragua (78%). However, 74% of those with democratic convictions in Honduras support gender equality (in comparison to 65% of those without democratic convictions). Women support gender equality substantially more than men (76% vs 60%). Support for gender equality increases with level of education, passing progressively from 62% to 74% and finally to 86%.

Hondurans are about as tolerant towards outgroups (60%) as Nicaraguans (60%). And those two publics are significantly more tolerant than Salvadorans (51%). In Honduras, the data indicates that those with democratic convictions are somewhat more tolerant than those without (62% vs. 59%), and men slightly more tolerant than women (61% vs. 58%).

How is support for these orientations distributed across different segments of Honduran society? The answer to that question comes from the data summarized in Table I-2. Of particular interest are the distributions of these outlooks across groups defined by gender, age,

**Table I-2. Support for Democratic Values by Democratic Procedural Norms, Gender, Age and Education**

	Procedural Democratic Norms		Gender		Age			Education		
	Democrats	Non-Democrats	Male	Female	18-30	31-60	61+	Low	Medium	High
<b>Individual Responsibility</b>										
Support	70.8%	73.1%	71.9%	70.8%	73.4%	69.3%	72.7%	70.8%	74.4%	67.7%
Does Not Support	29.2	27.0	28.1	29.2	26.6	30.7	27.7	29.2	25.6	32.3
N	(291)	(668)	(555)	(554)	(470)	(538)	(101)	(657)	(351)	(93)
<b>Gender Equality</b>										
Support	74.2%	64.6%	60.3%	76.1%	67.7%	70.7%	57.3%	62.6%	74.3%	85.9%
Does Not Support	25.8	35.4	39.8	23.9	32.3	29.3	42.7	37.4	25.7	14.1
N	(291)	(669)	(556)	(561)	(474)	(540)	(103)	(658)	(358)	(92)
<b>Tolerance</b>										
Support	62.5%	59.2%	61.2%	58.2%	58.4%	59.6%	67.4%	58.4%	62.6%	59.8%
Does Not Support	37.5	40.8	38.8	41.8	41.7	40.4	32.6	41.7	37.4	40.2
N	(291)	(695)	(544)	(534)	(461)	(522)	(95)	(629)	(350)	(92)

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey  
 Questions: Individual Responsibility: "People who don't get ahead should blame themselves, not society";  
 Gender Equality: "Men make better leaders than women"; Tolerance: "Homosexuals should not hold public office"

and level of formal education. We also consider how democratic values are related to support for, or opposition to, democratic procedural norms. Most research shows that democratic values are usually related to education (Nie et al., 1994). Consequently, there are reasons to expect that those with higher education will exhibit greater support for gender equality and tolerance. The data modestly support that expectation. It comes as no surprise to discover that women are stronger supporters of gender equality than men. And clearly, there is a significant relationship between support for democratic procedural norms and democratic values: people who support democratic procedural norms are more inclined to support gender equality and tolerance. In effect, these orientations are bundled together.

The effects of gender and age are, however, quite modest. Notice that young people are more supportive of gender equality, but they are less tolerant than their older counterparts. The effects of education are consistent. Indeed, a more detailed analysis of these data clearly indicates that education and support for equality are the two strongest predictors of support for these democratic procedural norms (for full results see Appendix II).

### **Perceptions about “How Democracy Works”**

Democracy is an essentially contested concept; people pour different meanings into the idea and there is no consensus about what are the boundaries of the concept (Macpherson, 1968). Consequently, it is not surprising to discover that different people associate “the workings of democracy” with quite different outcomes.

The Honduras benchmark survey presented people with three statements about democracy: (1) *“In a democracy, the economic system works poorly”*; (2) *“Democracies are unstable and there is too much discussion”*; and (3) *“Democracies aren’t good at maintaining order”*. And respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement.

There is no necessary, or logical, link between democracy and stability, order or even how economic systems perform but, in general, mature democracies tend to be more prosperous, consolidated democratic regimes tend to be stable, and public order is typically not problematical. The interpretive question probed here is: What do Hondurans themselves associate with the idea of “democracy”?

**Table I-3. Perspectives about “How Democracy Works”**

	Honduras (2010)	El Salvador (2009)	Nicaragua (2009)
<b>Democracies: Economic System Works Poorly</b>			
Agree	59.2%	60.8%	43.9%
Disagree	40.8	39.2	56.1
N	(1,061)	(959)	(1,051)
<b>Democracies: Too Much Discussion</b>			
Agree	71.9%	67.9%	64.7%
Disagree	28.1	32.1	35.3
N	(1,069)	(966)	(1,076)
<b>Democracies: Bad at Maintaining Order</b>			
Agree	50.5%	48.0%	39.0%
Disagree	49.5	52.0	61.0
N	(1,055)	(970)	(1,054)

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey; 2009 El Salvador Benchmark Democracy Survey; 2009 Nicaraguan Democracy Survey

Questions: *I'm going to read you a few things people say about democracy. For each assertion, I would appreciate if you would tell me if you strongly agree, agree, disagree or completely disagree (strongly agree, agree= agree; strongly disagree, disagree= disagree):*

- A. *In a democracy, the economic system works poorly.*
- B. *Democracies are unstable and there is too much discussion.*
- C. *Democracies aren't good at maintaining order.*

Once again, the Honduras results can be interpreted in their regional context: those same democratic statements were put to citizens in El Salvador and Nicaragua. In general, the distributions of responses in Honduras are quite similar to those found in El Salvador (see Table I-3). Hondurans tend to agree that, in democracies, the economic system works poorly (59%). And like Salvadorans, Hondurans are about evenly divided when it comes to their evaluations about whether democracies are “bad at maintaining order”. Nicaraguans have more positive evaluations of the “workings of democracy”; they are more inclined to disagree with all of these assessments compared to Salvadorans and Hondurans.

The data concerning Honduras reveal strong dissatisfaction with the functioning of democracy: 59% consider that the economic system functions poorly in a democracy. Half of Hondurans believe that democracy does a poor job of maintaining order. The most negative perceptions of the functioning of democracy were held by those without democratic convictions, men, those with the least education, and young people.

Predictably, as Table I-4 shows, those who support democratic procedural norms have less pessimistic views about how democracies work; they are less inclined than others to believe that in democracies the economic system works poorly, that there is too much discussion or that democracies do not do a good job of “maintaining order”. Notice, however, young people tend to have more negative views about the economic performance of democracies and they are more likely to think that there is “too much discussion” in democracies. Those with higher levels of education, by contrast, tend to be significantly less negative in their assessment of the “workings of democracies”.

**Table I-4. Perceptions about “How Democracy Works” by Democratic Procedural Norms, Gender, Age and Education**

	Democratic Procedural Norms		Gender		Age			Education		
	Democrats	Non-Democrats	Male	Female	18-30	31-60	61+	Low	Medium	High
<b>“In democracies... The Economic System Works Poorly</b>										
Agree	52.9%	60.4%	56.7%	61.8%	64.8 %	55.1%	54.5%	59.9%	59.3%	53.8%
Disagree	47.1	39.6	43.3	38.2	35.2	44.9	45.5	40.1	40.8	46.2
N	(291)	(654)	(540)	(521)	(454)	(506)	(101)	(613)	(346)	(169)
<b>There is Too Much Discussion</b>										
Agree	69.8%	72.0%	71.9%	72.0%	73.3%	70.8%	72.0%	71.8%	74.8%	63.3%
Disagree	30.2	28.0	28.1	28.1	26.8	29.2	28.0	28.2	25.2	36.7
N	(291)	(658)	(545)	(524)	(456)	(513)	(100)	(621)	(349)	(90)
<b>They are Bad at Maintaining Order</b>										
Agree	44.3%	54.1%	48.0%	53.2%	48.9%	51.3%	54.1%	54.1%	46.2%	40.9%
Disagree	55.7	46.0	52.0	46.8	51.1	48.7	45.9	45.9	53.8	59.1
N	(291)	(655)	(542)	(513)	(448)	(509)	(98)	(617)	(342)	(88)

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey

Questions: Economy: “In a democracy, the economic system works poorly”; Discussion: “Democracies are instable and there is too much arguing”; Order: “Democracies are not good to establish order”.

When these variables are all considered together and subjected to multivariate procedures<sup>10</sup>, it is clear that support for equality is a statistically significant predictor of perceptions about how democracy works. High levels of formal education also emerge as a robust and significant predictor. Moreover, *disagreement* with the statement that democracies are “bad at maintaining order” is also a predictor of support for procedural democratic norms<sup>11</sup> (full results are reported in Appendix III).

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<sup>10</sup>Using Ordinary Least Squares analysis.

<sup>11</sup> Disagreement with the notion that “in democracies the economic system works poorly” also predicts support for procedural democracy but that finding does not quite reach standard levels of statistical significance.

## II. Confidence in Institutions

Institutions perform critical functions; they serve as the bridge that links citizens to the state, society and the economy (Klingemann, 1995). To perform these tasks effectively, key governmental institutions have to generate at least a modicum of public support.

The benchmark survey presented Hondurans with a list of a wide variety of social, economic and political institutions. And for each, respondents were asked how much confidence they had “in the work that they do”. The basic responses are summarized in Table II-1. On balance citizens’ evaluations are somewhat negative, suggesting a broad degree of dissatisfaction with institutions. In general, key political and social institutions have modest levels of support. With regard to social institutions, the Catholic and Evangelical Churches are the only institutions that come close to generating the confidence of a majority of the population. Some 27% reported “total confidence” in the Catholic Church and another 22% said that they had “a lot of confidence” in that institution. The totals for the Evangelical Church were slightly lower: 19.9% had total confidence and 20.7% had “a lot of confidence” in that church. Approximately the same share of the citizenry expressed no confidence in either church: 24.4% had no confidence in the Catholic Church, while 24.5% had no confidence in the Evangelical Church. At the other end of the scale, the institution that garnered the highest share of “no confidence” (63.8% no confidence) was big business.

The most striking finding is just how little confidence Hondurans have in key governmental and political institutions, with the possible exception of municipal government. Fifty-eight percent of Hondurans have “no confidence at all” in the political parties, 52.6% have no confidence in the congress, 41.5% have no confidence in the courts and 32.9% have no confidence in the presidency. It seems likely that these low levels of support are related to the political crisis leading up to the 2009 *coup d’état* and its aftermath. The survey reveals continuing high levels of polarization related to the forcible removal of President Zelaya. For example, although 52.3% of Hondurans have “no confidence” in the National Resistance Front, this group nonetheless has the high confidence of 21.9% of all Hondurans, a figure



**Table II-1. Public Confidence in Institutions**

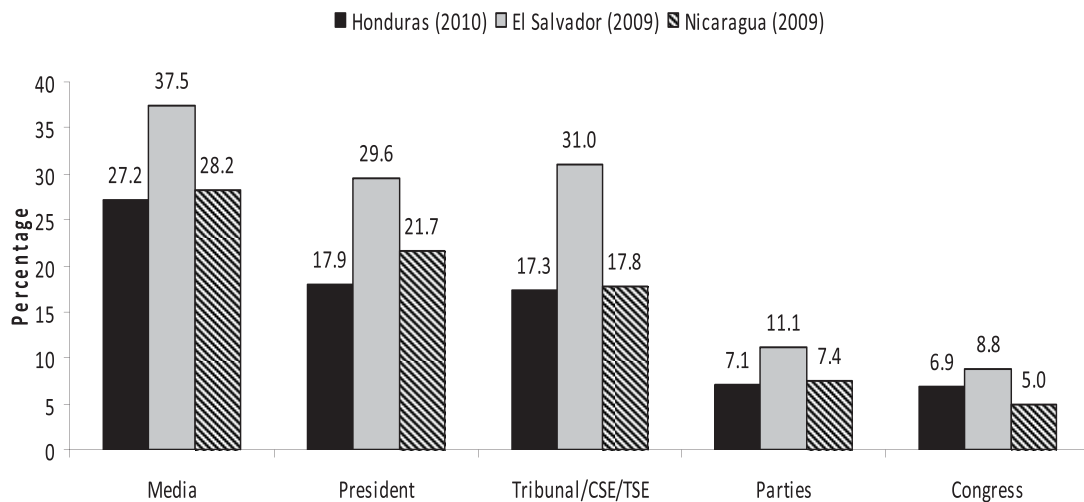
	<b>Total Confidence</b>	<b>A lot of Confidence</b>	<b>Some Confidence</b>	<b>No Confidence</b>	<b>N</b>
<i>"How much confidence do you have in..."</i>					
Catholic Church	26.8%	22.2	26.5	24.4	1,134
Evangelical Church	19.9%	20.7	34.9	24.5	1,117
Army	11.6%	11.6	43.6	33.3	1,143
National Resistance Front	10.8%	11.1	25.8	52.3	1,014
Mayor/Municipal	9.7%	19.2	46.4	24.8	1,137
Labour Unions	8.6%	14.4	44.3	32.8	1,023
Media	8.1%	19.1	54.6	18.3	1,138
UN	8.0%	14.4	44.7	32.9	942
OAS	8.0%	12.6	41.7	37.8	943
Human Rights Committees	7.1%	15.2	46.6	31.1	1,044
TSE	5.8%	11.5	48.7	34.1	1,083
Police	5.6%	10.0	44.2	40.2	1,139
President	5.1%	12.8	49.2	32.9	1,124
Government	4.9%	11.6	52.9	30.6	1,139
Truth Commission	3.8%	9.9	43.2	43.0	888
Judges	3.3%	10.7	44.5	41.5	1,098
Congress	1.7%	5.2	40.5	52.6	1,103
Political Parties	1.5%	5.7	33.9	58.9	1,096
Big Business	1.1%	5.1	29.9	63.8	1,072

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey

Question: *Now, I am going to mention a number of organizations. I'd like to know how much confidence you have in the work they do: Total, a lot, some, none.*

only slightly lower than the percentage of Hondurans who express high confidence in the army (23.2%). Even lower numbers of citizens express "high confidence" in the congress, judiciary and presidency (6.9%, 14% and 17.9%, respectively). President Lobo scored higher in his leader rating than the institution of the presidency, suggesting that the public may be more positively disposed towards him than to the institution he leads. The state security forces fare poorly overall: 40.2% of Hondurans have no confidence at all in the police and 33.3% have no confidence in the army. Finally, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), the institution responsible for guaranteeing the secrecy and integrity of the vote, generated no confidence at all among one in three Hondurans.

The general finding that Hondurans have low confidence in their institutions is reinforced when the Honduran data are placed in broader regional context. Figure II-1 reports how Hondurans compare with Salvadorans and Nicaraguans in their respective evaluations of a comparable set of institutions — the media, the office of the President, Election Commissions, political parties and Congress. In general, Hondurans express less confidence in these institutions than do Salvadorans and Nicaraguans. The only exception is that Nicaraguans are somewhat less confident in their Congress (5%) than are their Honduran counterparts (6.9%). The difference, however, is minor and not statistically significant. Hondurans are “leader centric” in the sense that they express much higher levels of confidence in the Office of the President than they do in either political parties or Congress. That same pattern also holds among Salvadorans and Nicaraguans. A more detailed multivariate analysis of which background factors predict support for the TSE, political parties and the Office of the President reveal some consistent patterns (full results appear in Appendix IV). Intriguingly, first, Hondurans who are most interested in politics are much *more* likely to express confidence in the TSE and political parties. And second, hondurans who support democratic values are substantially *less* inclined to express confidence in these institutions.<sup>12</sup>



**Figure II-1. Public Confidence in Political Institutions**

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey; 2009 El Salvador Benchmark Democracy Survey; 2009 Nicaraguan Democracy Survey

Question: *Now, I am going to mention a number of organizations. I'd like to know how much confidence you have in the work they do: Total, a lot, some, none* (Percentages are those with “total” or “a lot” of confidence)

<sup>12</sup> The data indicate also that people with higher levels of knowledge are more active, but they are also more cynical.

The idea that citizens might be critical of their political parties is hardly unique to transitional democracies. Indeed, there is a large body of evidence from around the world indicating that citizens in consolidated democracies are also critical of their political parties (Dalton 2006; Newton and Norris 2000; Inglehart 1997). What separates Hondurans from consolidated democracies is the scale of disaffection with political parties. The proportions of Hondurans expressing “no confidence at all” in their political parties (59%) is about two-and-a-half times greater than the levels of dissatisfaction with political parties found, on average, among publics in Sweden, France, Britain, and the United States or Germany (2006 World Values Survey data).

### **III. Patterns of Engagement**

Support for democratic norms and values are necessary but not sufficient conditions for democratic consolidation. Healthy democracies require at least minimal levels of citizen engagement. In an ideal democratic world, perhaps, all citizens should be interested, engaged, knowledgeable, trusting and active. Most countries, well-established democracies included, fall well short of this ideal. Even so, there are substantial variations, both within and between societies, when it comes to the extent to which citizens live up to, or fall short of, these ideals.

Interest in the political life of the country is important because psychological engagement provides citizens with the motivation to seek out information about their community (Gabriel & Van Deth, 1994). Interpersonal trust contributes to the effective functioning of democracies because trust lubricates social and political relations; it lowers transaction costs. Community involvement also turns out to be a breeding ground for engaging the wider political community. It has been repeatedly demonstrated in multiple national settings that rich social networks promote broader forms of political participation (Verba et al., 1995; Dalton, 1996; Klesner, 2007). And together, trust and associational involvement provide a productive mix of conditions, social capital, which is conducive to economic and community well-being (Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 1993). Countries with large stocks of social capital are all prosperous and stable democracies whereas countries with low stocks of social capital are nearly all impoverished authoritarian environments (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Cynicism, the belief that people in government do not care about ordinary citizens, is corrosive to the effective functioning of democracies. But knowledge about politics and more civic engagement increase the chances of achieving a sustainable democracy and they decrease the chances that transitional democracies will suffer democratic setbacks (Diamond, 2008).

The benchmark surveys provide reliable data that allow us to explore systematically a series of important questions: Who is engaged? How? And to what extent? Where are the stocks of knowledge and interest high? Where are they low? Who is inclined to be engaged and active? Where are there pockets of cynicism and distrust?

The place to begin is with the aggregate findings. And once again, benchmark data from Nicaragua and El Salvador provide useful context for interpreting the Honduran findings. The basic results are summarized in Table III-1. When it comes to levels of interest in politics and

**Table III-1. Engagement, Cross-national Comparisons**

	Honduras (2010)	El Salvador (2009)	Nicaragua (2009)
<b>Interest in Politics</b>			
Interested	39.9%	51.2%	39.9%
Disinterested	60.1	48.8	60.1
N	(1,141)	(1,017)	(1,179)
<b>Interpersonal Trust</b>			
Trust	21.2%	31.6%	20.3%
Distrust	78.8	68.4	79.7
N	(1,142)	(1,031)	(1,175)
<b>Association Membership<sup>A</sup></b>			
High	52.0%	30.4%	22.4%
Medium	27.5	24.9	24.1
Low	20.5	44.8	53.5
N	(1,030)	(1,034)	(1,145)
<b>Political Action+</b>			
Active	30.7	13.9%	36.1
Inactive	69.3	86.1	63.9
N	(997)	(987)	(930)
<b>Cynicism</b>			
Cynical	64.2%	66.2%	59.4%
Not Cynical	35.8	33.8	40.6
N	(1,124)	(1,000)	(1,128)
<b>Political Knowledge</b>			
High	57.3	56.5%	44.6
Medium	30.1	28.3	37.8
Low	12.7	15.2	17.6
N	(1,170)	(1,050)	(1,200)

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey; 2009 El Salvador Benchmark Democracy Survey; 2009 Nicaraguan Democracy Survey

Note:

(Interpersonal Trust):

*Do you think you can trust most people (in your community) or do you have to be careful when dealing with people?*

You have to be careful, distrust=0;

Most people are reliable, trust=1

(Associational Membership):

*I'd like you to tell me if you have always, often, sometimes or never participated in the following types of meetings or activities over the past year:*

1. Church or religious groups (Always, often, sometimes=1; Never=0)
2. Cultural groups
3. Sports groups
4. Unions or workers associations
5. Community development groups

An additive index with a range of values 0-5: 0 through 1 = low membership (0), 2=moderate membership levels (1), 3 through 5= high levels of membership (2)

(Political Action):

Please tell me if you have ever participated, are willing to do so, or if you would never participate under the circumstance:

1. Request the government's authority to assist with a community problem (Done/willing=1; Never do/not willing=0)
2. Participate in a legally authorized demonstration
3. Participate in a strike at your workplace
4. Support a public protest

This additive index takes on values that range from 0 (inactive) to 4 (active). The most active (4) are compared to those who are less so (0-3).

^NOTE: The distinct differences in "Associational Membership" scores in Honduras and other Latin American countries are attributable to the substitution of "Parental Associations" for "Cultural Groups". Hondurans are much more likely to participate in parental associations than other Latin Americans in cultural groups. Below is the distributional Breakdown:

Participate in Parental Association	Honduras (2010)	El Salvador (2009)	Nicaragua (2009)
Always	19.3%		
Often	10.0		
Sometimes	26.7		
Never	44.0		
N	1,122		
<b>Participate in a Cultural Group</b>			
Always		4.7%	3.2%
Often		5.4	3.4
Sometimes		23.9	16.2
Never		66.1	77.1
N		1,525	1,395

+NOTE: The distinct differences in political action scores in El Salvadoran and Honduran/Nicaraguan are attributable to variations in the "willingness" of individuals to perform a political act.

Request Government help to Solve Community Problem	Honduras (2010)	El Salvador (2009)	Nicaragua (2009)
Have done	23.8%	14.8%	14.2%
Would do	61.7	64.2	63.2
Would never do	14.5	20.9	22.6
N	1123	1032	1142
<b>Participate in a Demonstration</b>			
Have done	12.0	5.8	12.3
Would do	48.8	23.9	41.1
Would never do	39.2	70.3	46.6
N	1089	1021	1133
<b>Participate in Workplace Strike</b>			
Have done	6.9	3.6	6.1
Would do	39.8	21.0	39.1
Would never do	53.3	75.4	54.8
N	1066	1019	1132
<b>Support a Public Protest</b>			
Have done	9.1	4.3	8.0
Would do	45.6	22.7	41.9
Would never do	45.4	73.0	50.1
N	1058	1018	1126

trust, Hondurans and Nicaraguans turn out to be quite similar. As in Nicaragua (40%), about two out of five Hondurans (40%) report that they are interested in politics, significantly fewer than their counterparts in El Salvador (51%). And about one in five Hondurans (21%) indicate that they trust other people in their community. That is substantially less than their Salvadoran counterparts (32%) but similar to the levels found in Nicaragua (20%).

Hondurans are more involved in the life of their local community (52%) than either their Salvadoran (30%) or Nicaraguan counterparts (22%). The differences are striking. And they are correspondingly more likely (31%) than their Salvadoran counterparts (14%) to engage in direct political action strategies – in demonstrations or strikes. Hondurans are somewhat less likely than Nicaraguans (31% versus 36%) to be “active” in these respects, and they are both significantly more cynical (64% versus 59%) and more knowledgeable (57% versus 45%) about their political environment than Nicaraguans.

Table III-2 unpacks these data and sheds additional light on how these different attributes are distributed within the Honduras population. It also illuminates the extent to which these characteristics are distributed between those who do, and those who do not, support democratic procedural norms.

Researchers in multiple settings have repeatedly shown that people who support democratic procedural norms are generally more likely to be interested in and knowledgeable about politics. They are also more inclined to be active (Almond & Verba, 1965; Verba, Nie & Kim, 1978). The evidence from Honduras supports these expectations. Consider the first two columns in Table III-2. Clearly, Hondurans who are democrats are more interested in politics than non-democrats (47% versus 39%). They are also more active (38% versus 28%) and more knowledgeable (73% versus 56%). All of these differences are statistically significant. Notice also, however, that they are more cynical (73% versus 62%) and somewhat less trusting of others. The results concerning gender differences are far more mixed, but they too work in predictable ways. Men are more active than women (55% versus 49%) and significantly more knowledgeable about politics (64% versus 50%). As elsewhere in the region, politics tends to be a male domain.

Age variations are important in Honduras for a combination of reasons. First, by international standards, Honduras has a young population. And second, as in many other

	Democratic Procedural Norms		Gender		Age			Education		
	Democrat	Non-Democrat	Male	Female	18-30	31-60	61+	Low	Medium	High
<b>Interest in Politics</b>										
Interested	46.5%	39.2%	40.7%	39.1%	47.1%	34.3%	35.6%	35.5%	45.0%	50.0%
Disinterested	53.5	60.8	59.3	60.9	52.9	65.7	64.4	64.5	55.0	50.0
N	(297)	(681)	(568)	(573)	(486)	(554)	(101)	(679)	(360)	(94)
<b>Interpersonal Trust</b>										
Trust	18.9%	20.7%	23.7%	18.8%	20.5%	21.5%	22.9%	25.2%	15.5%	12.1%
Distrust	81.1	79.3	76.3	81.3	79.5	78.5	77.1	74.8	84.5	87.9
N	(297)	(676)	(566)	(576)	(483)	(554)	(105)	(687)	(355)	(91)
<b>Association Membership</b>										
High	55.3%	52.2%	55.2%	48.9%	49.0%	56.8%	40.7%	51.6%	47.9%	69.7%
Medium	28.9	27.1	28.9	26.0	29.1	25.9	28.6	25.3	33.3	22.5
Low	15.8	20.8	15.9	25.1	22.0	17.3	30.8	23.1	18.8	7.0
N	(273)	(621)	(515)	(515)	(437)	(502)	(91)	(605)	(330)	(89)
<b>Political Action</b>										
Active	37.8%	28.3%	31.3%	30.1%	31.9%	31.7%	19.5%	28.1%	32.9%	41.9%
Inactive	62.2	71.7	68.7	69.9	68.1	68.3	80.5	71.9	67.1	58.1
N	(267)	(611)	(502)	(495)	(430)	(480)	(87)	(580)	(325)	(86)
<b>Cynicism</b>										
Cynical	72.9%	61.6%	64.5%	64.0%	65.5%	65.0%	54.0%	61.7%	66.8%	71.7%
Not Cynical	27.1	38.5	35.5	36.0	34.5	35.0	46.0	38.3	33.2	28.3
N	(295)	(671)	(563)	(561)	(481)	(543)	(100)	(666)	(358)	(92)
<b>Political Knowledge</b>										
High	73.0%	55.8%	64.2%	50.5%	58.2%	58.1%	48.6%	48.2%	69.3%	79.8%
Medium	21.4	30.3	25.4	34.6	28.8	31.3	29.9	35.9	21.9	18.1
Low	5.6	14.0	10.4	14.9	13.1	10.6	21.5	16.0	8.8	2.1
N	(304)	(687)	(578)	(592)	(497)	(566)	(107)	(702)	(365)	(94)

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey

Age variations are important in Honduras for a combination of reasons. First, by international standards, Honduras has a young population. And second, as in many other transitional societies, young people typically have higher levels of formal education than their older counterparts. Thus, it comes as no surprise to discover that the youngest age group (those 18-30), and those with the highest levels of formal education, are significantly more likely than their older and less well-educated counterparts to express high levels of interest in politics. Significantly, perhaps, they are also less trustful of others.



Older people tend to be as involved in the associational life of their communities than the young. But they are not more inclined to be politically active. Hondurans with higher levels of education, and who are middle age or younger (under 60 years of age), also tend to be more knowledgeable about politics.

In short, it is democrats, the young, and those who are more educated who tend to be the most engaged and most active in Honduran politics. This group is systematically more knowledgeable about politics but also more cynical and less trusting than others. It is older males and those that have lower levels of education who tend to be more trusting and more active in the social life of their communities.

#### IV. Voter Turnout

Voting is a basic right of all citizens in democratic countries and exercising that right serves an important function: It is the key mechanism by which citizens hold their elected leaders accountable. Levels of voter turnout vary quite substantially across different countries. Some of those variations are attributable to differences in electoral rules (Franklin, 2004). Voter turnout, for example, tends to be higher under proportional representation electoral rules. Research also shows that most citizens go to the polls on election day out of a sense of duty (Blais, 2000).

The Honduras benchmark survey asked all respondents whether they had voted in the last election, the Presidential election of 2009. As Figure IV-1 shows, slightly more than three



**Figure IV-1. Voting Turnout (Sample)**

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey

Question: *Did you vote in the last presidential elections of November 2009?*

out of five respondents reported that they did vote in that election.<sup>13</sup> These levels of voter turnout are comparable to those recent reported in recent elections in Nicaragua (2006) 61% and El Salvador (2009) 54%. The previous section indicated that well-educated respondents, democrats and young people tend to be more engaged than their more poorly educated, less democratically inclined and older counterparts. So there is good reason to expect that these

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<sup>13</sup> Survey data nearly always “over report” voter turnout, usually because of social desirability effects; most people think that they ought to vote and do not like to admit to others that they did not. In the 2009 Presidential election the Election Commission’s final report indicated that turnout was about 50%.

very same groups of citizens might be more likely to vote. The basic finding, summarized in Table IV-1, suggests little support for this hypothesis. While apparent that females, those with higher incomes and the rural are more likely to vote than males, low income earners and urban dwellers, what is most striking is the non-findings and counterintuitive findings with respect to education, democracy and age. Those with low levels of formal education are as likely as their

**Table IV-1. Voting Turnout by Procedural Democratic Norms, Interest in Politics, Cynicism and Socio-Demographics**

	Presidential Election (2009)		
	Voter	Non-Voter	N
<b>Socio-Demographics</b>			
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	60.7%	39.3	578
Female	64.2%	35.8	592
<b>Age</b>			
18-30	53.9%	46.1	497
31-60	68.4%	31.6	566
61+	71.0%	29.0	107
<b>Education</b>			
Low	64.5%	35.5	702
Medium	57.0%	43.0	365
High	66.0%	34.0	94
<b>Income</b>			
Low	58.8%	41.2	221
Medium	64.0%	36.1	638
High	64.3%	35.8	179
<b>Residence</b>			
Urban	60.9%	39.1	453
Rural	63.5%	36.5	717
<b>Norms/Beliefs</b>			
<b>Democratic Procedural Norms</b>			
Democrat	63.2%	36.8	304
Non-Democrat	62.9%	37.1	687
<b>Interest in Politics</b>			
None	60.5%	39.5	190
High	62.3%	37.7	114
<b>Cynicism</b>			
Low	63.3%	36.7	109
High	60.9%	39.1	722

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey  
 Question: *Did you vote in the last presidential elections of November 2009?*

higher educated counterparts to report that they voted. Likewise, Democrats are no more likely to vote than non-democrats (63% respectively). These non-findings may be linked to the degree to which democrats and the young are dissatisfied with the political system as a whole. Indeed, people who are more cynical about politics are less likely to vote; democrats and the highly educated hold, predictably, the highest levels of cynicism amongst their cohorts.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Of those with the highest education rates, 72% are cynical. Only 62% of those with low levels of education are cynical. And levels of cynicism for democrats (73%) are higher than those for non-democrats (62%).

The most significant finding to emerge from these data concerns age differences. Despite the fact that young people are as knowledgeable about politics<sup>15</sup> and have significantly higher levels of education, those 30 years old or younger are significantly *less* likely to vote (54%) than those who are 60 or over (71%). The differences are sharp and significant. The puzzle then is this: Why is it that younger people who are more interested in politics tend to vote less than others?

Those respondents who indicated that they did not vote in the last election were all asked an open-ended follow-up question: “*Was there a particular reason why you did not vote?*” The responses to that question are summarized in Table IV-2. The first column in the table report the aggregate results and the other columns unpack the data by age group and gender.

**Table IV-2. Reasons for Not Voting (2009 Presidential Election)**

	<b>Aggregate</b>	<b>18-30</b>	<b>31-60</b>	<b>61+</b>
Lack of Identification	23.7%	33.6%	11.8%	19.4%
Lack of interest	45.4	43.2	49.4	38.7
Lack of Transportation	2.5	0.9	3.9	6.5
Out of Municipality	6.4	4.4	9.6	3.2
Sick	4.8	2.6	6.2	12.9
Not on Voters' List	3.2	2.2	3.9	6.5
Other	13.9	13.1	15.2	12.9
N	438	229	178	31
		<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	
Lack of Identification		20.7%	27.0%	
Lack of interest		48.0	42.7	
Lack of Transportation		1.3	3.8	
Out of Municipality		7.5	5.2	
Sick		4.9	4.7	
Not on Voters' List		3.1	3.3	
Other		14.5	13.3	
N		227	211	

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey  
 Question: *Was there a particular reason why you didn't vote?*

Coding categories for reasons for not voting (responses to the open-ended question):

**No Identification:** Did not have an ID card; ID card in deteriorated condition

**Lack of Interest:** Have never voted; Do not have a political preference; Do not have confidence in politicians; not interested; voting is useless; Do not like the candidate's proposal; my vote was not important because I knew who was going to win; Because everything will go on the same; Candidates' proposals did not catch their attention; Do not like any political party; Political parties never keep their promises; distrust process

**Lack of Transportation:** Voting centre is far away; Lack of transport to their voting centre

**Out of Municipality:** Changed municipality of residence; Was out of the country

<sup>15</sup> 58% of those 30 and under answered all political knowledge questions correctly. Of the oldest cohort (61+) only 49% responded correctly to the knowledge questions.

**Sick:** Because of illness

**Not on Voters' List:** Did not appear in the voter registry; my information did not appear in the voter registry

**Other:** Did not get permission to leave work; Because of religious reasons; Not yet 18 years old; Had to take care of the children; Arrived late to the voting centre; lack of information; lack of security at the voting centre; Afraid of electoral violence; Too old; Personal issues; lack of time; support resistance movement

First, notice that the most frequently cited reason (45%) for not voting was “lack of interest”. That holds for all age groups and for men and women alike. This comes as no surprise whatsoever. The next most frequently mentioned reason for not voting, however, turns out to be “lack of identification” (23.7%).

Second, notice also that people in different age groups give different reasons for why they do not vote. Young people (18-30 years of age) were almost three times more likely (34%) than 31-60 year olds (12%) to say that they did not vote because they did not have identification. And they were slightly less than two times as likely (19%) than those over 61 years of age to offer that reason for not voting.

Of those between the ages of 31 and 60, nearly half (49%) said that they did not vote because they were “not interested”. To be sure, a significant portion of those under 30 years of age (43%) also said that they were “not interested”.

Notice also that there is a significant gender gap. One in four women, compared to one in five men, said that they did not vote because they did not have identification.<sup>16</sup>

### **Do Issues Matter?**

The conventional wisdom during elections is that citizens care about issues. Political parties are in the business of presenting voters with different issue positions and they campaign on those issues so that voters can make informed choices and support political parties that best reflect their issue preferences (Downs 1957; Clarke et al. 2005; Abramson et al. 2010). How much issues matter to electoral outcomes is a matter of some debate. Moreover, there are important distinctions between different types of issues; some are “hard”, some are “easy”. But, there is no guarantee, of course, that citizens scanning the campaign platforms of various political parties will necessarily find issue positions expressed by parties that speak to their own preferences (Carmines and Stinson 1986; Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995).

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<sup>16</sup> Gender and age have independent effects on the reasons given for non-voting.

The Honduras Benchmark survey asked all respondents the same open-ended question: “Which is the most urgent problem facing the country today?” The question provides a direct measure of issue salience. The aggregate findings are summarized in the left-most columns of Table IV-3, and the data in subsequent columns are unpacked by different criteria. Columns two through five distinguish between those who reported that they voted in the 2009 election, and then distinguish further between those who *chose* not to vote and those who were *unable* to vote. At issues the question of whether the preferences of non-voters are similar to, or different from, the preferences of those who voted. Then, there is also the question of whether the priorities of those who were *unable* to vote were similar to, or significantly different, from those who did vote or who chose not to vote. Recall that a substantial proportion of those who were unable to vote (see Table IV-2) were young. And it is entirely possible that the preferences of young people could be significantly different from those of older people. There is

**Table IV-3. Most Urgent Problem Facing the Country Today: Voters, Non-Voters and Socio-Demographics**

	Aggregate	Presidential Election (2009)			Socio-Demographics				Voter ID	
		Voter	Chose Not to Vote*	Could Not Vote**	Youth	Old	Men	Women	PNH	PLH
Economic Crisis	31.6%	29.0%	29.4%	31.1%	31.6%	29.3%	30.4%	32.8%	33.2%	33.2%
Gangs/Violence /Drugs	29.1	28.8	31.0	30.2	30.5	28.3	29.3	28.9	31.6	30.3
Unemployment/ Poverty	16.9	16.5	13.6	18.9	17.7	18.2	16.2	17.6	17.3	18.5
Political Issues	7.9	9.3	10.9	9.4	7.4	13.1	10.1	5.7	6.8	6.2
Education	5.0	4.3	4.9	.9	4.3	3.0	4.4	5.6	4.3	4.5
Corruption	4.8	5.8	5.4	5.7	6.7	1.0	4.2	5.4	3.8	5.1
Health	2.3	3.3	2.2	1.9	1.1	3.0	2.3	2.2	1.6	.6
Social Problems	1.1	1.5	1.6	0.0	.2	2.0	1.3	.9	.5	.6
Other	1.4	1.8	1.1	1.9	.5	2.0	1.9	.9	.8	1.1
N	1066	400	184	106	446	99	526	540	370	178

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey

\*\*“Chose Not to Vote” respondents indicated they had “no interest” when asked why they didn’t vote

\*\*“Could Not Vote” respondents indicated they didn’t have identification or were not on the voters list when asked why they didn’t vote

Question: *For you, what is the most urgent problem Honduras is facing today?*

also evidence that the preferences of men and women are somewhat different. Furthermore, it is reasonable to suppose that supporters of different political parties might have different preferences and different views about what issues are “most important”. After all, we would expect that different political parties will appeal to voters with different issue preferences.

The most striking conclusion to be drawn from the data summarized in Table IV-3 is a non-finding: there is virtually no variation. About 60% of all respondents identify “the economic crisis” and some combination of “gangs, violence, drugs” as the two most important clusters of issues facing the country. Hondurans are evenly divided on those assessments; there is a broad consensus. Voters are as likely as non-voters to share those priorities. Men and women also reach the same conclusions about the country’s problems. What is truly remarkable is that the priorities of those who supported the two main rival political parties, the PNH and the PLH, are almost identical.

To be sure, young Hondurans are marginally more inclined than their older counterparts to say that the “economic crisis” is most important. And women are somewhat more inclined than men to hold that view. Those who were unable to vote, older respondents and women, were also slightly more inclined than others to say that unemployment and poverty are the most urgent problem.

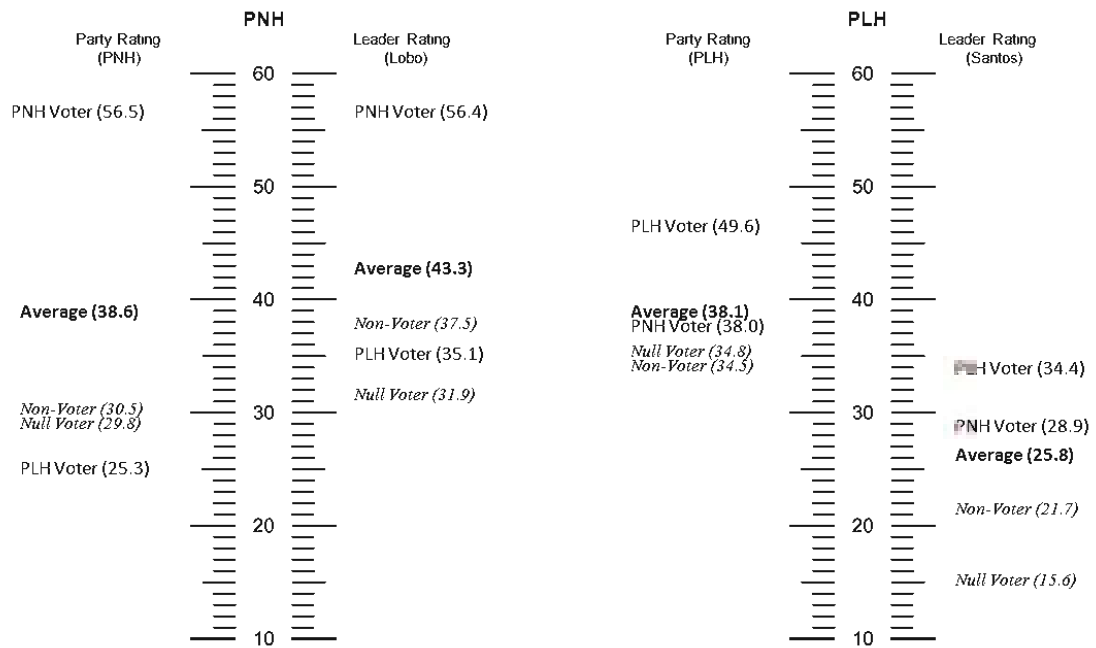
But it is the similarities across all these groups that are far more striking than the differences. Hondurans essentially agree about what are the problems facing the country, and there is a partisan consensus about the matter.

## V. Political Parties and Leaders

If there is a basic consensus among Hondurans about what are the major problems facing the country and there are virtually no differences in these outlooks between supporters of the two major parties, then an intriguing question arises: What motivates citizens to support one particular political party versus another on election day?

One possibility is that it is people's affective orientations, their general positive feelings about "their" political party.<sup>17</sup> Negative feelings about the rival party may also matter. Another possibility is that it is feelings about the party leaders that matters most. The region does, after all, have a history of "strong leaders".

The Honduras Benchmark survey probed views about both of the major political parties, the PNH and the PLH, as well as evaluations of the leaders of those parties, Lobo and Santos.



**Figure V-1. Party and Leader Ratings**  
Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey

<sup>17</sup> In advanced industrial states, these orientations are usually captured by "party identification". Empirically, party identification is strongly correlated with political party thermometer scores (see Blais et al. 2003).



Respondents were presented with a standard “feeling thermometer” scale.<sup>18</sup> Respondents were asked to assign thermometer scores that best reflected their feelings about both the leaders and the political parties. The key findings are stylized in Figure V-1. Consider, first, the national average scores for the political parties and the leaders. Notice that in every case the average scores assigned to political parties and leaders fall below 50. The two major political parties get about the same score, about 38, well short of 50. That finding is consistent with earlier evidence indicating that most Hondurans have very little confidence in their political parties.

Now consider the scores for leaders of the two major parties – Lobo (PNH) and Santos (PLH). These scores are also below 50. In fact, Santos’ average score (25.8) falls well short of 50. Notice that most Hondurans rate Lobo (43.3) somewhat higher than the scores they give to his party (38.6). In that sense, Lobo brings a leadership dividend to his party. Santos, by contrast, reflects much lower support, not surprising in view of the divisions within his party over former President Manuel “Mel” Zelaya. Santos’ leader rating (25.8) falls well short of the average rating given to his party, the PLH (38.1). Former President Zelaya retains a 41.2 rating, even after the coup and his exile. The survey was taken before former President Zelaya returned to Honduras in May 2011.

What else do these data reveal? The second clear finding is that there are asymmetries in the structure of these ratings. And the scale of those asymmetries falls into sharp relief when the focus shifts to the question: How did those who voted for each party rate their own party? And then, how did they rate their party leader?

Consider first the case of the PNH. Not surprisingly, PNH voters rate their party in positive territory (56.5), well above the national average. PNH voters also rate their own party leader positively (56.4). Indeed, for them, Lobo brings no particular leader dividend to the party but nor is he a liability; the party and leader ratings are about the same. It is not surprising that PLH voters rate the PNH much lower (25.3). The parties are, after all, electoral rivals. But those same PLH voters also rate the PNH leader (Lobo) substantially higher than they rate the PNH. For them, Lobo has a leadership dividend of about ten points (35.1 – 25.3).

In the case of the PLH, the patterns are quite different. Predictably, PLH voters rate their own party the highest. But that rating, surprisingly, is a very lukewarm 50. Significantly, these ratings fall well short of how PNH voters view their party.

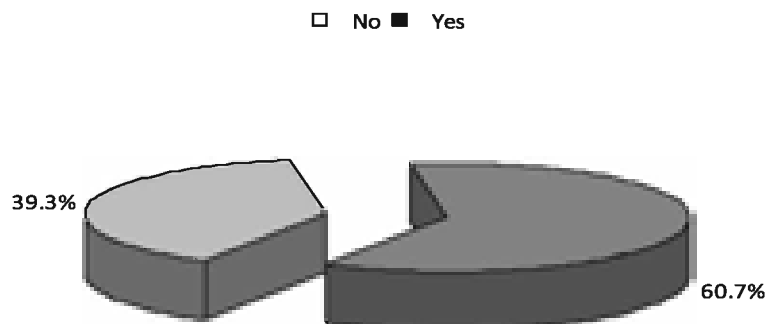
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<sup>18</sup> Where a score of 100 represents “very warm” feelings and 0 represents “very cold” feelings; 50 signifies “neither warm nor cold”

What about the leader ratings? PLH voters give their leader, Santos, a very cool 34.4 rating. This most likely reflects the pronounced divisions in the party connected to the tumultuous leadership of former President Zelaya and the 2009 *coup d'état*. Surprisingly, perhaps, PLH voters rate Lobo, the leader of their major rival party (PNH), higher (35.1) than they rate Santos (34.4), but not as high as Zelaya (46.2). Zelaya's support is 7.3 points higher among older voters age 61 and above than it is among voters age 18 to 30, but his support varies little by gender or level of education. Those who support democratic procedural norms rate Zelaya three points higher than non-democrats, 43.7 versus 40.7, respectively. While voters who supported the Liberal party in the 2009 presidential elections rate Zelaya 46.2, voters who supported a minor party and those who did not vote rate Zelaya the highest of any sector of society, 47.3 and 49.8 respectively.

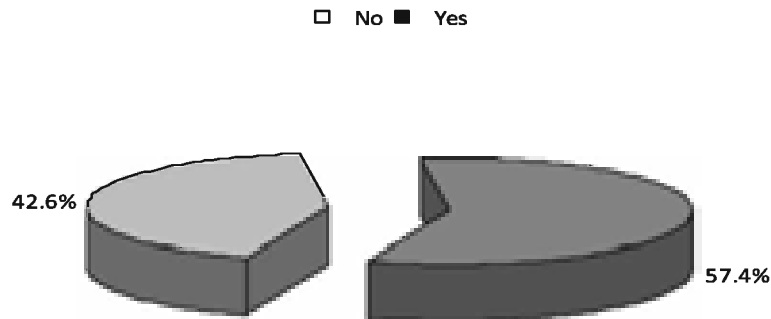
If Hondurans have so little confidence in their existing political parties (see Table II-1) and average Hondurans hold negative evaluations of the two major political parties and leaders, then how open are citizens to the idea of supporting new and different political parties?

The benchmark survey asked two additional questions toward that end. The first question asked: "Do you think it would be a good idea to make it easier to create new political parties?" And the second question probed that idea further: "Would you vote for a new party in the next election?"



(i) *Make It Easier for Creation of New Political Parties*

**Figure V-2i. Attitudes About Electoral Choices**



*(ii) Vote for New Party in Next Election*

**Figure V-2ii. Attitudes About Electoral Choices**

Responses to those two questions are summarized in Figure V-2. The results are clear. First, a substantial majority of Hondurans agree that it would be a good idea to make it easier to create new political parties. Second, a substantial majority (57%) also indicate that they would be prepared to “vote for a new party in the next election”. Together, these findings seem to represent another face of Honduran’s distressingly low levels of confidence in their political parties.

What lies behind these sentiments? A deeper probing of the findings indicates (Table V-1) that younger people and those with higher levels of formal education are more open to the idea of having new political parties, as are men. And those who voted for parties other than the PNH or the PLH, and those who spoiled their ballots, are also significantly more likely to embrace the idea of having new parties.

Who would be prepared to vote for a new party in the next election? The findings are similar but not identical. Those who said that they voted for parties other than the PLH and the PNH, and those who spoiled their ballots in the last election are much more inclined to say that they would vote for a new party. There are two additional findings that make a significant contribution to our understanding of Hondurans’ orientations to their political parties. First, it is non-democrats and those who have confidence in political parties who are much more inclined than democrats, and those who lack confidence in political parties, to indicate that they would vote for a new party in the next election. In effect, democrats are inclined to disengage from political parties.

**Table V-1. Attitudes About Electoral Choices by Socio-Demographics and Political Evaluations**

Political Environment	Make It Easier for Creation of New Political Parties			Vote for New Party in Next Election		
	Yes	No	N	Yes	No	N
<b>Aggregate</b>	60.7%	39.3	1072	57.2%	42.6	1021
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	62.4%	37.6	537	59.1%	40.9	511
Female	59.1%	40.9	535	55.7%	44.3	510
<b>Age</b>						
18-30	64.1%	36.0	459	61.9%	38.1	436
31-60	58.5%	41.6	515	54.7%	45.3	492
61+	57.1%	42.9	98	50.5%	49.5	93
<b>Education</b>						
Low	59.1%	40.9	633	55.9%	44.1	614
Medium	61.4%	38.6	342	58.3%	41.7	319
High	67.4%	32.6	89	63.8%	36.3	80
<b>Democratic Procedural Norms</b>						
Democrat	59.8%	40.3	283	56.1%	43.9	271
Non-Democrat	61.3%	38.7	654	58.7%	41.3	620
<b>Vote in Last Presidential Election (2009)</b>						
PNH	54.6%	45.4	366	49.3%	50.7	353
PLH	50.8%	49.2	183	48.6%	51.4	175
Other	66.1%	33.9	109	71.6%	28.4	102
<b>Trust in Political Parties</b>						
None	60.9%	39.1	598	57.9%	42.1	579
Some	61.5%	38.6	358	56.3%	43.7	332
Much	60.0%	40.0	70	61.2%	38.8	67

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey

\*Other includes both votes for third parties and spoiled ballots; ^Much Trust= those with “total” or “a lot of” trust in political parties

Second, the evidence also suggests that a substantial proportion of those who voted for the two major political parties do not seem to express much solidarity with those parties. Nearly half (49%) of those who said they voted for the PNH in the last election also reported that they would vote for a new party in the next election. The same holds for PLH supporters; 49% of that group indicated that they would be prepared to vote for a new political party in the next election.

Together the data indicate that for those who do participate electorally, ties to political parties are weak and loyalties are fluid. And those who qualify as democrats are *less* likely than others to support existing or new political parties. They are not “tuned out”; they are more knowledgeable about politics. They are “turned off”; they are more cynical and have less confidence in political parties of any stripe.

## **VI. Evaluations of the Political Environment**

The benchmark surveys undertaken in the region all contain the same common core set of questions. Without those, reliable data intra-regional comparisons would not be possible. But those surveys also asked questions probing some of the particularities of each of the different domestic political environments. The Honduras benchmark survey asked additional questions investigating views about such issues as corruption, openness to reform and concerns that surfaced during the coup.

This final substantive section of the analysis begins with an overview of Hondurans' broad evaluations of their political environment and how they see their options. It then turns to consider respondents views about corruption. Following that analysis it then probes two issues that were particularly salient during the turmoil surrounding the coup – whether Presidents should be re-elected, and whether there should be constitutional reform.

### **The Political Process**

To probe general evaluations about “the political process in Honduras”, all respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- (1) *“Sometimes violence is necessary as a response to injustice”*;
  - (2) *“It is better to move to another country to ensure a better future”*;
  - (3) *“Political power is concentrated in the hands of too few people”*;
  - (4) *“Dialogue is the best way to solve the problems of the country”*.
- (Do you very much agree, agree, disagree, or totally disagree)

The core findings are summarized in Table VI-1. What is most striking from the results are the similarities in the views of Hondurans, Salvadorans and Nicaraguans. To be sure Nicaraguans were somewhat *less* inclined (23%) than Hondurans (30%) or Salvadorans (30%) to think that violence is a justifiable response to injustice. And Nicaraguans were somewhat *more* likely to say (43%) that “exit”, moving to another country, was the best option to ensure a “better future”. Thirty-nine percent of Hondurans and 38% of Salvadorans held that view. There are differences, but they are modest ones.

**Table VI-1. Evaluations of the Political Environment**

Political Environment	Honduras (2010)	El Salvador (2009)	Nicaragua (2009)
<b>Sometimes Violence is Necessary</b>			
Completely Agree	8.8%	6.7%	5.0%
Agree	21.3	23.7	18.4
Disagree	48.0	45.0	48.3
Completely Disagree	22.0	24.7	28.3
N	1143	1504	1373
<b>Better to Move to Another Country</b>			
Completely Agree	11.2%	9.5%	9.4%
Agree	28.0	28.5	33.9
Disagree	43.7	44.8	38.8
Completely Disagree	17.2	17.2	17.9
N	1137	1504	1381
<b>Political Power Concentrated in Too Few Hands</b>			
Completely Agree	25.5%	21.0%	25.6%
Agree	46.3	51.3	47.0
Disagree	18.2	23.3	23.1
Completely Disagree	10.0	4.5	4.3
N	1099	1403	1260
<b>Dialogue is the Best Way to Solve Problems</b>			
Completely Agree	47.9%	50.2%	67.7%
Agree	46.3	45.9	28.6
Disagree	3.5	3.2	2.5
Completely Disagree	2.3	.7	1.2
N	1153	1507	1376

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey; 2009 El Salvador Benchmark Democracy Survey; 2009 Nicaraguan Benchmark Democracy Survey, 2009

And when it comes to perceptions about whether “political power is concentrated in too few hands,” once again, the responses of Hondurans, Salvadorans and Nicaraguans are essentially the same. A massive majority of Hondurans (72%), Salvadorans (72%) and Nicaraguans (73%) agree with that view. And there is near unanimity when it comes to endorsing the view that “dialogue is the best way to solve problems”.

There are significant variations within the Honduran population and most of these correspond with expectations. For example, those with low levels of formal education are significantly more inclined than their better educated counterparts to believe that violence is a justifiable response to injustice. And non-democrats are more inclined than democrats to hold that view. Nor is it surprising to find that it is younger people who are the most inclined to want to leave the country to secure a better future. Indeed almost half (45%) of those between 18 and 30 years of age thought that it is “better to move to another country”. And it is those with lower levels of education (42%) rather than those with more education (25%) who are most inclined to want to leave.

## Corruption

The Honduras benchmark survey probed citizens' views about corruption in two different ways. First, the survey aimed to measure what moral position Hondurans held about bribery. All respondents were asked "Do you think that it sometimes is justified to pay a bribe?" The follow-up questions probed people's personal experiences with corruption.

Corruption is not unusual in transitional societies, particularly those which are riddled with material insecurity and where the rule of law is fickle. But that does not mean that people in those settings necessarily embrace bribery and corruption. Indeed, they might regard it as an unavoidable cost of everyday transactions. To what extent, then, do Hondurans embrace the idea that paying a bribe is "sometimes justified"?

The basic finding, reported in Table VI-2, is clear. The majority of respondents (77%) disagree with the view that paying a bribe is sometimes justifiable. That said, a significant

**Table VI-2. Views About Corruption by Democratic Procedural Norms, Gender, Age and Education**

Aggregate	Democratic Procedural Norms		Gender		Age			Education			
	Democrats	Non-Democrats	Male	Female	18-30	31-60	61+	Low	Medium	High	
<b>Sometimes Justified to Pay a Bribe</b>											
No	76.6%	83.9%	74.6%	76.2%	77.1%	74.4%	78.1%	79.0%	77.4%	74.9%	77.5%
Yes	23.4	16.1	25.4	23.8	23.0	25.6	21.9	21.0	22.6	25.1	22.47
N	(1061)	(280)	(634)	(525)	(536)	(441)	(520)	(100)	(633)	(331)	(89)

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey

minority of people, more than one in five, thought that paying a bribe was sometimes justified. A deeper probing of these data show that sociodemographic factors are not particularly useful predictors of what views people will have about bribery. It turns out that the strongest predictor of orientation towards bribery is people's views about democracy. People who support democratic procedural norms are significantly more likely than others to think that paying a bribe is *not* justifiable.

**Table VI-3. Predictors of Support for Bribes**

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$
<b>Socio-Demographics</b>			
Female	.02	.04	.02
Age	-.05	.03	-.07
Education	.02	.03	.04
Income	.05	.04	.08
Employed	.02	.04	.01
Urban	.01	.04	.01
<b>Engagement</b>			
Political Knowledge	-.02	.03	-.03
Cynicism	.06	.04	.07
Political Interest	.02	.02	.03
Interpersonal Trust	-.03	.05	-.03
Associational Involvement	.04	.03	.07
<b>Vote</b>			
PLH	.00	.04	.00
Other	.07	.05	.06
<b>Democratic Perspectives/Norms</b>			
Procedural Democrat	-.16***	.04	-.18
Constant	.12	.09	
Adjusted R Square	.03		
N	448		

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey.

<sup>†</sup> $p < .10$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; OLS coefficients reported.

Note: Dependent Variable: Justified in taking bribe (Scale from 0 (no) to 1 (yes)) ; reference group for "Vote" is PNH voters

A majority clearly do think that bribery is not justifiable but how widespread do Hondurans think is the corruption problem? Respondents were asked: *"in your experience how prevalent do you think is corruption among public officials in Honduras?"*

The responses are summarized in Table VI-4. Three significant findings emerge from these data. First, a clear majority of Hondurans (69%) believe that corruption among Honduran public officials is "very prevalent". Second, there are significant differences between how democrats and non-democrats view that world. Democrats are more inclined (74%) than non-democrats (68%) to think that corruption is very prevalent. And third, there are significant socio-demographic variations. Men, older people and those with higher levels of formal education are significantly more likely than women, younger people and those with less formal education to see corruption as more widespread.



**Table VI-4. Attitudes About Corruption Prevalence**

	Aggregate	Democratic Procedural Norms		Gender		Age			Education		
		Democrat	Non-Democrat	Male	Female	18-30	31-60	61+	Low	Medium	High
<b>Prevalence of Corruption Among Public Officials</b>											
Very Prevalent	69.2%	74.1%	67.9%	71.7%	66.7%	65.0%	72.1%	73.7%	65.9%	72.6%	76.9%
Somewhat Prevalent	15.8	15.8	14.6	13.7	17.9	19.1	13.3	13.1	16.4	15.4	14.3
Somewhat Rare	9.5	8.4	10.2	9.7	9.3	10.4	9.3	6.1	10.1	9.2	6.6
Very Rare	5.6	1.7	7.3	4.9	6.2	5.5	5.3	7.1	7.6	2.8	2.2
N	1097	297	657	548	549	472	526	99	642	357	91

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey

Notes: Cynicism, political knowledge and political interest are all positive predictors of beliefs about the prevalence of corruption among public officials (see OLS, Table VI-5). The biggest predictor is cynicism. After controlling for these factors, democratic procedural norms no longer plays a role.

These findings justify a deeper probing of the data. What factors drive these perceptions? Table VI-5 considers a variety of variables together and it reports the net effects of each variable while controlling for the effects of all others. The results are revealing in three respects. First, they show that cynicism<sup>19</sup> is the most powerful predictor of beliefs about the prevalence of corruption among public officials. Second, political knowledge is also important. Those who “know more” are significantly more likely to believe that corruption is more widespread. Third, of all the socio-demographic factors, it is only age that emerges as a significant predictor. Older respondents are significantly more likely to believe that corruption is widespread.

There are significant non-findings reported in Table VI-5 also. While democrats (see Table VI-4) are more inclined to think that corruption is widespread among Honduran officials, support for democratic norms are not significant in this larger and more powerful test. Part of the reason is that democrats are also better educated, more knowledgeable and more cynical.

<sup>19</sup> Cynicism is measured by responses to two questions: “Politicians are prepared to lie to get elected” (Agree/Disagree) and “Politicians do not care about people like me” (Agree/Disagree).

**Table VI-5. Predictors of Corruption Prevalence**

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$
<b>Socio-Demographics</b>			
Female	-.02	.09	-.01
Age	.12 <sup>†</sup>	.07	.09
Education	.10	.08	.07
Income	.02	.08	.01
Employed	-.12	.09	-.07
Urban	.03	.09	.02
<b>Engagement</b>			
Political Knowledge	.14*	.07	.10
Cynicism	.35***	.09	.18
Political Interest	.12*	.05	.11
Interpersonal Trust	.13	.10	.06
Associational Involvement	.01	.06	.01
<b>Vote</b>			
PLH	.05	.10	.02
Other	.12	.12	.05
<b>Democratic Perspectives/Norms</b>			
Procedural Democrat	.09	.09	.05
Constant	2.64***	.19	
Adjusted R Square	.06		
N	466		

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey

<sup>†</sup> $p < .10$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; OLS coefficients reported.

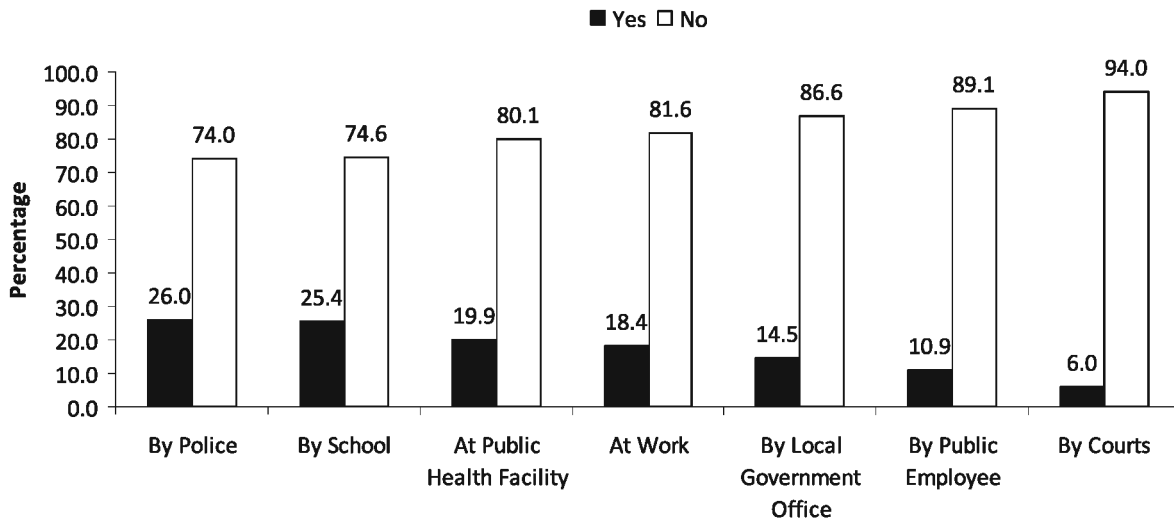
Note: Dependent Variable: Corruption Prevalent Among Public Officials (Scale from 1 (rare) to 4 (very prevalent)); reference group for "Vote" is PNH voters

Coefficients are OLS estimates

Political knowledge and cynicism, in effect, absorb the effects of education and democratic outlooks. And age is a significant predictor, perhaps, because age is a proxy for experience. The more experience people have with the Honduran political environment the more likely they are to have been exposed to corruption.

Beliefs about bribery or corruption are one thing, but to what extent have Hondurans been personally touched by experiences with corruption?

The Honduras benchmark survey asked respondents seven specific questions as to whether they had been asked for a bribe during the last year: (1) by a police officer; (2) by a public employee; (3) at work; (4) in a local government office; (5) in the courts; (6) at a public health facility; (7) by a school (if they had a child in school). The basic findings are summarized in Figure VI-1. The most frequent circumstances under which people say they have been asked

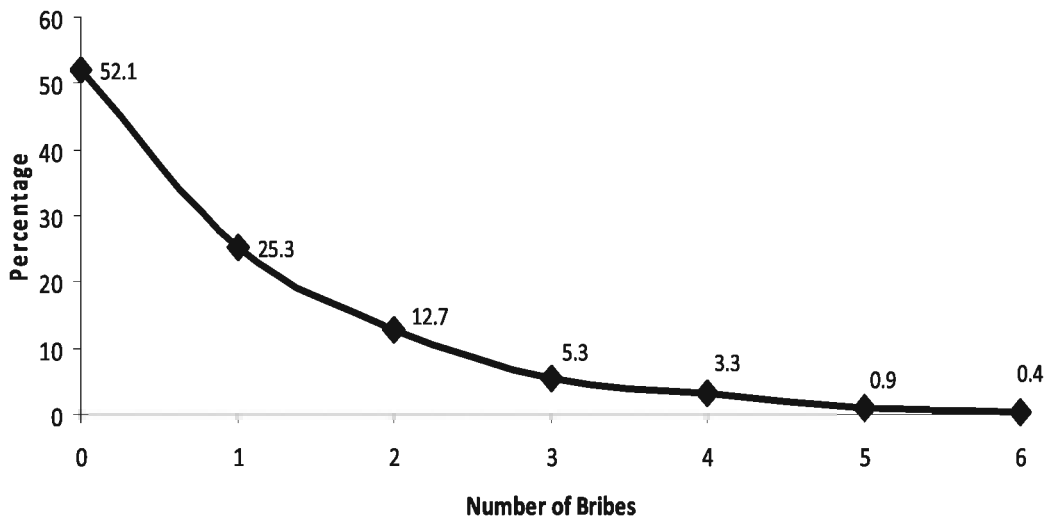


**Figure VI-1. Corruption Experiences\***

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey

\*Respondents who report that they engaged with the institution, are included in these analyzes. Thus, there are variations in the sample sizes.

for bribes are by the police (26%), by a school (25%) and at a public health facility (20%). The scope of experiences with bribery is truly striking. The data summarized in Figure IV-2 clearly show that almost half of the Honduran population (48%) report that they have first-hand experience with requests for a bribe from one quarter or another.



**Figure VI-2. The Social Scope of Requests for Bribes**

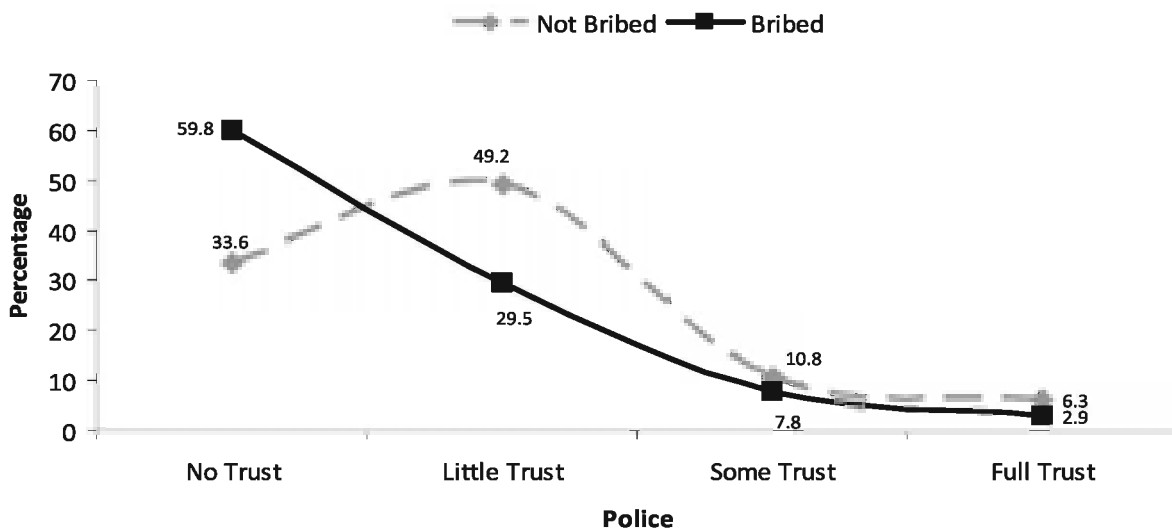
Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey

The concern, of course, is that corruption might corrode the legitimacy and effectiveness of institutions that are vital to democratic performance. Is there any evidence of that?

Two pieces of data can be brought together to provide first, a specific test, and then a more general test of that proposition. Recall that the benchmark survey asked respondents about their levels of confidence in a variety of institutions and, as we have just seen, the survey also asks people to identify, from a list, who has offered them a bribe in the past 12 months. The “police” are included in the list of institutions as a potential source from which a bribe was requested. The empirical question is: Does the request of a bribe from the police have any relationship to the levels of trust in the police?

The short answer to that question is “yes”, and the evidence is stylized in Figure VI-3. People who have been bribed by the police are much more likely (60%) to say that they have “no trust” in the police than people who have not personally experienced bribery at the hands of the police (34%). The correlation is clear and it is statistically significant.

The broader question is especially important: Does personal experience with requests for bribes from *one* governmental institution have any impact on peoples’ evaluations of *all* governmental institutions?



**Figure VI-3. Trust in Police by Experience with Police Bribes**

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey

This proposition is tested by investigating the relationship between (a) people's reports of requests for bribes and (b) levels of confidence in three governmental institutions (the government, police and judges). The correlations between experience with bribes and confidence in government is  $r=.12$  (significant at .000). And data for the case of the police and judges are  $r=.14$  and  $r=.08$  and significant at the .000 and .001 respectively.

The evidence is persuasive. Experience with corruption at the hands of one government organization corrodes public confidence in other areas of government.

### **Attitudes to Constitutional Change**

The Honduran constitutional crisis revolved around President Zelaya's efforts to hold a citizen referendum to begin the process of convening a constituent assembly to re-write the constitution. Opponents viewed the plan as a veiled attempt to unconstitutionally eliminate presidential term limits so Zelaya could run for re-election. They feared he was becoming too close to the democratically-elected but increasingly authoritarian president of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, in both ideology and political strategy. For his part, President Zelaya spoke of the planned change as an attempt to modernize the country's institutional framework to make Honduras more inclusive and more just. Although the supreme court ruled the referendum itself unconstitutional and repeatedly ordered the president to cancel it, plans to hold the referendum in conjunction with the 2009 general elections continued apace. On June 28, 2009, armed troops stormed the Presidential palace and deported Zelaya to Costa Rica. The UN, the OAS and the EU condemned his removal as a coup. The military acted at the direction of the supreme court, and both the supreme court and the national assembly formally characterized the changes as a constitutional succession on the basis of the president's absence from the country, even though the reason for his absence was that he was forced into exile in violation of the constitution. The country remains divided over the issues.

How divided? The Honduran benchmark survey asked respondents three questions that provide some purchase on that issue: (1) "*Do you think it would be a good idea to allow for presidential re-election?*"; (2) "*Are you aware of the efforts to re-write the constitution?*"; and (3) "*Do you think it would be a good idea to reform the constitution?*" The basic data are summarized in Table VI-6. The Honduran public clearly does remain divided on these issues.

**Table VI-6. Attitudes About Constitutional Changes**

Constitutional Changes	Honduras (2010)
<b>Good Idea to Allow Presidential Re-Elections</b>	
No	57.2%
Yes	42.8
N	1087
<b>Aware of Efforts to Re-Write Constitution</b>	
No	68.5%
Yes	31.5
N	996
<b>Support Constitutional Reform</b>	
No	39.3%
Yes	60.8
N	986

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey

More than half (57%) oppose the idea of Presidential re-election, but a substantial minority support the idea (43%). Almost two out of five Hondurans oppose the idea of constitutional reform and three out of five support it.

The place to begin the analysis is with “awareness”. Fewer than one in three Hondurans indicated that they were aware of efforts to re-write the constitution. That is not a surprising result in that by the time of the survey, Hondurans were somewhat removed from the constitutional crisis and constitutional crises are hard issues in the sense that they engage abstractions. As with other hard issues, the expectation is that awareness would be driven by education, interest and knowledge, the hallmarks of cognitive engagement.

The results of multivariate tests, reported in Table VI-7 support those expectations. Political interest is related to awareness in Honduras as elsewhere. Formal education provides citizens with the tools to navigate abstract concepts and that too is significantly related to awareness. Not surprisingly, knowledge is a significant predictor; knowledge and awareness are conceptually related. And age, a proxy for exposure, is also modestly related to awareness of attempts to re-write the Constitution. Together, these factors capture political sophistication (Luskin). The expectation is, then, that awareness is confined to that segment of the public that is attentive.

**Table VI-7. Predictors of Awareness Constitution Re-Write**

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$
<b>Socio-Demographics</b>			
Age	.04 <sup>†</sup>	.02	.06
Education	.16***	.02	.23
<b>Engagement</b>			
Political Knowledge	.05*	.02	.07
Political Interest	.14***	.03	.14
Constant	.08*	.04	
Adjusted R Square	.09		
N	971		

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey

<sup>†</sup> $p < .10$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; OLS coefficients reported.

Note: Dependent Variable: Aware of Efforts to Re-Write the Constitution (Scale from 0 (no) to 1 (yes))

Just because most Hondurans are not aware of attempts to tinker with the constitution does not mean that they cannot harbor strong feelings about the less abstract issues of whether the constitution ought to be modified and whether presidents ought to be allowed to run for re-election.

Variations in support for allowing the re-election of presidents emerge where one would expect. The 2009 presidential election was understood by some as an effort to move beyond the constitution crisis, and so there are reasons to expect partisanship to matter. It does. PLH supporters, according to the data in Table VI-8, are the strongest opponents of Presidential re-election, and people who voted for parties other than the PLH and the PNH are the strongest supporters of the idea. Moreover, people who trust political parties more are more inclined to support the re-election option.

Support for the principle of constitutional reform, however, is not the same thing as support for Presidential re-election, at least in the minds of these respondents. Notice that men are significantly more likely than women to support Constitutional reform. The same holds for those who voted for parties other than the PNH and PLH in 2009. Constitutional reform, after all, holds out the possibility that the rules of the game could change in ways that could loosen the grip of the two major political parties.

**Table VI-8. Attitudes Towards Constitutional Change**

Political Environment	Good Idea to Allow Presidential Elections			Re-	Support Constitutional Reform		
	Yes	No	N		Yes	No	N
<b>Aggregate</b>	42.8%	57.2	1087		60.8%	39.3	986
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	43.3%	56.7	534		66.7%	33.3	502
Female	42.3%	57.7	553		54.6%	45.5	484
<b>Age</b>							
18-30	44.6%	55.4	464		57.7%	42.3	418
31-60	41.0%	59.1	525		64.0%	36.0	480
61+	43.9%	56.1	98		58.0%	42.1	88
<b>Education</b>							
Low	44.6%	55.4	639		61.4%	38.6	567
Medium	38.2%	61.8	348		59.5%	40.5	321
High	45.2%	54.8	93		62.2%	37.8	90
<b>Democratic Procedural Norms</b>							
Democrat	41.3%	58.7	286		60.1%	39.9	268
Non-Democrat	44.6%	55.4	659		61.3%	38.7	612
<b>Vote in Last Presidential Election (2009)</b>							
PNH	38.6%	61.4	381		53.7%	46.3	335
PLH	32.3%	67.7	186		57.8%	42.2	173
Other	51.8%	48.2	110		70.9%	29.1	103
<b>Trust in Political Parties</b>							
None	42.1%	57.9	603		61.6%	38.4	557
Some	41.6%	58.4	358		61.6%	38.4	320
Much	53.5%	46.5	71		52.3%	47.7	65

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey

More definitive evidence that different factors derive views about presidential re-election and support for Constitutional reform is presented in Table VI-9. Interest in politics is the main factor driving support for presidential re-election. Those who hold democratic norms, the young and those who are more knowledgeable tend to oppose the idea.



**Table VI-9. Predictors of Attitudes Towards Constitutional Change**

	Good Idea to Allow Presidential Elections	Re-	Support Constitutional Reform	
<b>Socio-Demographics</b>	$\beta$		$\beta$	
Female	-.02		-.17***	
Age	-.03		.02	
Education	-.06		.02	
Income	-.04		-.07	
Working	.03		.00	
Urban	-.01		-.03	
<b>Engagement</b>				
Political Knowledge	-.03		-.07 <sup>†</sup>	
Political Interest	.09**		.07 <sup>†</sup>	
Cynicism	.04		.01	
<b>Democratic Procedural Norms</b>				
Democrat	-.03		-.01	
Constant	.47*	.07	.77*	.07
Adjusted R Square	.01		.03	
N	810		760	

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey

<sup>†</sup>p<.10; \*\*\* p<.001; \*\* p<.01; \* p<.05; OLS coefficients reported.

Note: Dependent Variable: Good Idea/Support (Scale from 0 (no) to 1 (yes))

Different factors move people to support constitutional reform. Clearly men support the idea more than women. But that idea is also somewhat more popular among those in lower income groups and those who are less knowledgeable about politics. Supporters of constitutional reform are also more likely to be rural dwellers. These variations are detectable, but not profound.

### Attitudes to the Truth Commission

Evaluations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission provide another prism through which to evaluate political polarization in the wake of the June 2009 coup. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which began its investigations in May 2010, was assigned the tasks of understanding the events before, during, and after the coup and of making recommendations for the future. But the Commission itself became a focus of controversy. Supporters of the coup wanted the Lobo Administration to “let sleeping dogs lie”, while opponents expressed concern that the commission would be a whitewash and fail to deliver an honest account of the coup with full disclosure of all the relevant evidence. They lacked faith in the process.

The benchmark survey asked respondents how much trust they had in “the work of the Truth Commission”. The basic findings are summarized in Table VI-10. The striking initial

**Table VI-10. Trust in The Truth Commission<sup>A</sup> by Socio-Demographics and Political Evaluations**

Political Environment	Trust Truth Commission		
	Completely Distrust	Some Trust	N
<b>Aggregate</b>	43.0%	57.0	888
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	43.6%	56.4	452
Female	42.4%	57.6	436
<b>Age</b>			
18-30	40.7%	59.3	381
31-60	45.4%	54.6	432
61+	41.3%	58.7	75
<b>Education</b>			
Low	41.1%	59.1	503
Medium	44.6%	55.4	294
High	49.4%	50.6	85
<b>Democratic Procedural Norms</b>			
Democrat	45.9%	54.1	244
Non-Democrat	43.1%	56.9	557
<b>Vote in Last Presidential Election (2009)*</b>			
PNH	37.5%	62.5	301
PLH	46.8%	53.2	156
Other	41.3%	58.7	92
<b>Trust in Government*</b>			
None	65.9%	34.1	276
Some	34.7%	65.3	455
A Great Deal	24.7%	75.3	150
<b>Trust in Political Parties*</b>			
None	59.9%	40.1	491
Some	23.2%	76.8	306
A Great Deal	11.8%	88.2	68

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey

<sup>A</sup>"Some Trust"= total trust + a lot of trust + some trust; Distrust= No trust at all

\*\*"Other" includes both votes for third parties and spoiled ballots; "A Great Deal"= those with "total" or "a lot of" trust in political parties

finding is that more than two out of five respondents (43%) said that they had "no trust whatsoever" in the work of the Truth Commission. The distribution of these evaluations echoes previous findings: those with the highest levels of formal education trust the Truth Commission the least. And democrats are somewhat less likely to trust the Truth Commission than non-democrats.

Equally significant, perhaps, is clear evidence that these outlooks resonate powerfully with vote choice in the 2009 Presidential election, an election that was viewed by some as an effort to move beyond the coup. Not surprisingly, PLH voters were significantly more likely to distrust the Truth Commission's work than PNH supporters. More striking still is the extent to which views about the Truth Commission are entangled with trust in government and in political parties. Nearly two thirds (66%) of those who have no trust in government also report that they

have no trust in the Truth Commission. Conversely, three out of four of those who have a great deal of trust in the government express at least some trust in the Truth Commission. These

**Table VI-11. Predictors of Trust in The Truth Commission**

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$
<b>Socio-Demographics</b>			
Female	.03	.05	.03
Age	.05	.04	.06
Education	-.02	.04	-.02
Income	.02	.05	.03
Employed	-.02	.05	-.02
Urban	-.07	.05	-.07
<b>Engagement</b>			
Political Knowledge	-.01	.04	-.01
Cynicism	.01	.05	.01
Political Interest	.05 <sup>†</sup>	.03	.09
Interpersonal Trust	.06	.06	.05
Associational Involvement	.00	.03	.00
<b>Vote/Parties</b>			
Vote PLH	-.04	.06	-.04
Vote Other	-.02	.07	-.02
Trust Parties	.28**	.09	.16
Trust Government	.23***	.06	.21
<b>Democratic Procedural Norms</b>			
Democrat	-.02	.05	-.02
Constant	.31**	.12	
Adjusted R Square	.09		
N	392		

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey

<sup>†</sup> $p < .10$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; OLS coefficients reported.

Note: Dependent Variable: Trust Truth Commission (Scale from 1 (at least some trust) to 0 (no trust at all)); reference group for "Vote" is PNH voters

emphatic results are similar when it comes to political parties. Those who trust political parties a great deal also overwhelmingly (88%) express at least some trust in the Truth Commission. The multivariate results reported in Table VI-11 reinforce that interpretation.

General trust in political parties and the government are the most powerful predictors of trust in the Truth Commission. Those who voted in 2005 for parties other than the PNH (reference category), the more knowledgeable, better educated, employed urban dwellers are systematically more likely to express no trust in the Truth Commission. The directions of all these relationships are consistent.

## VII. Concluding Discussion

There are several findings that have emerged during the course of the preceding analysis. Some are worrisome, and of those, not all have obvious short-term solutions. The evidence concerning beliefs about democracy falls within the latter category. Support for democratic procedural norms is not widely embraced by Honduran citizens. There are, to be sure, pockets of democratic outlooks within the population and those pockets are deepest among those with higher levels of education. Those citizens are more knowledgeable about politics, and more interested. But Honduras is not an hospitable environment for these democrats and many have “checked out” in the sense that they express deep distrust about institutions that are essential to an effective democracy.

Our findings demonstrate low levels of citizen support for most of the political, social and economic institutions in Honduras. On the one hand, these findings reflect a crisis of confidence in Honduran public life. On the other, they demonstrate that citizens appreciate the important role institutions should play in their democracy. Although the study does not directly analyze the 2009 *coup d'état* and the effect it has had on citizen confidence in Honduran institutions, it does demonstrate an important, and likely related, phenomenon: strong disaffection from the political system as a whole. It seems likely that these low levels of support are related to the constitutional crisis leading up to the 2009 *coup d'état* and its aftermath.

Honduran citizens clearly feel unrepresented and dissatisfied with the performance of their government institutions even though they continue to participate in elections and vote primarily for the traditional political parties.

The crisis of confidence also encompasses civil society and new organizations that emerged in the wake of the coup. More than half of Hondurans have “no confidence” in the National Resistance Front and nearly as many (43%) have no confidence in the Truth Commission set up to promote national reconciliation.

The panorama of low levels of confidence in key institutions is troubling, as are indicators of continuing political polarization. While we cannot measure the impact of the coupon

public confidence directly because this is the first benchmark survey conducted in Honduras, it is clear Hondurans have lower levels of confidence in the political system than their neighbors in Central America.

Hondurans express strikingly low levels of interpersonal trust and high levels of cynicism. Together, these sentiments are characteristic of hybrid regimes and clientelistic politics. Under those dynamics who you know is more important than what you know, and connections trump principles. Added to these characteristics is evidence of widespread corruption, yet another feature of political life in hybrid regimes. The pernicious effects of corruption are evident from the data; it corrodes support for institutions that are essential to the legitimacy of democratic life. And corruption is insidious in the sense that encounters with corrupt practices in one setting undermine public confidence in collateral institutions. Furthermore, corruption provides people with additional reasons to be cynical and distrustful.

From weak social, political and economic institutions, to low levels of interpersonal trust, to high rates of cynicism, Honduras faces major challenges in building responsive democratic institutions capable of gaining citizen trust and fostering reconciliation and social cohesion. Programmatic initiatives to repair the social fabric will almost certainly require patience and an appetite for long time horizons. At the same time, there are identifiable areas that might be more amenable to targeted shorter term efforts.

First, there is the challenge facing women, the issue of gender equality. The principle of gender equality is not widely embraced. Indeed, it is not unanimously supported by women. To the extent that core values tend to be internalized during the formative years, the implication is that programs designed to promote gender equality, by both educating men and empowering women, are likely to be more effective if they are directed at the young.

Second, there are significant barriers to participation facing young Hondurans. The evidence is unequivocal: a very substantial proportion of young citizens cannot vote because they do not have proper identification. That problem is serious but it can be directly addressed by a targeted program. The data show that the TSE is held in low regard. One possible remedy might be for the TSE to lead a vigorous effort to resolve that problem of identification documentation for young Hondurans.

Third, it is very clear that Honduras' major political parties face a crisis of confidence. They do not seem to be vehicles that present issue alternatives to the public: the priorities of supporters of both major parties are almost identical. And citizen loyalties to these parties are

frail and fluid. The challenge facing political parties, then, is to rebuild public trust and to generate support bases within the public.

Fourth, not all civil society institutions, clearly, fall into the “crisis of institutions” category. Of all the institutions evaluated, the Catholic Church and the Evangelical Church, along with mayors, stand out for somewhat different reasons. Initiatives engaging church-related NGOs may generate broader citizen support than might otherwise be the case. Of all political institutions surveyed, it is the mayors and local governments that fared best. Local-level initiatives may prove more successful in strengthening social cohesion, building citizen confidence and promoting citizen participation. The results of the benchmark survey point to relatively high levels of engagement by citizens in their own local communities. Other political institutions, such as political parties, may be able to leverage public confidence in local politics to improve their standing with the Honduran public.

One piece of good news from the preceding investigation is that most Hondurans seem to be committed to solving problems through dialogue and without violence. It is also good news to discover that young and well-educated Hondurans are significantly more inclined to have democratic outlooks than their counterparts. That portends well for the future. The problem is that a significant proportion of young Hondurans think that their best prospect for a bright future lies outside of their own country. The challenge, then, is to engage young Hondurans in democracy consolidation projects that will encourage the belief that they can have a bright future within Honduras.

Prominent actors in Honduran society have posited that constitutional reform could be a viable solution to the social and institutional crisis in the country. By packaging a new social covenant in a restructured institutional framework, some argue, Honduras could weave a stronger social fabric and generate confidence in its institutions. Our findings suggest this approach is inadequate to resolve the profound divisions in Honduran society because even new institutions lack the confidence of broad sectors of the population. It appears that the crisis is here to stay and the citizenry cannot see a clear means of ending it. Without first generating dialogue and trust between citizens, new institutions seem unlikely to overcome the profound divisions that mark contemporary Honduran society. Thus, it is clear one of the critical tasks facing Honduras today is rebuilding confidence among its people and between its citizenry and its institutions.

In the wake of the coup, it was a common refrain that fault lines were emerging, fracturing communities, families and organizations. Reconstructing areas of confidence will be a critical precondition for reconciliation. While nearly 8% of Hondurans believe political issues represent the most urgent problem facing the country today, the overwhelming majority of Hondurans still believe that dialogue is preferable to violence as a means of solving political problems—94% agree that dialogue is the best way to solve problems compared to 30.1% who believe resorting to violence is sometimes necessary. Perhaps the process of reconciliation should begin with a more modest goal: generating spaces for dialogue and interaction so that those who today are polarized might once again sit down together to talk.

## Appendix I. The Distribution of the Sample

Department	Sample Point	Interviews	Percent
Atlantida	6	60	5.00
Choluteca	7	70	5.83
Colon	4	40	3.33
Comayagua	7	70	5.83
Copan	5	50	4.17
Cortes	21	210	17.50
El Paraiso	6	60	5.00
Francisco M	23	230	19.17
Gracia A D	1	10	.83
Intibuca	3	30	2.50
Islas De La	1	10	.83
La Paz	3	30	2.50
Lempira	4	40	3.33
Ocotepeque	2	20	1.67
Olancho	8	80	6.67
Santa Barba	7	70	5.87
Valle	3	30	2.50
Yoro	9	90	7.50
TOTAL	120	1200	100.00



### Appendix III. Predictors of Support for Democratic Procedural Norms

	Stage 1		
	B	SE	$\beta$
<b>Socio-Demographics</b>			
Female	-.02	.04	-.02
Age	-.05 <sup>†</sup>	.03	-.07
Education	.06*	.03	.09
Income	.00	.03	.00
Employed	.02	.04	.02
Urban	-.02	.04	-.03
<b>Democratic Values</b>			
Individual Responsibility	-.02	.04	-.01
Gender Equality	.09*	.04	.09
Tolerance	.05	.04	.05
<b>Democratic Perspectives</b>			
Economic System Works Poorly	-.06 <sup>†</sup>	.04	-.07
Too Much Discussion	.02	.04	.01
Bad at Maintaining Order	-.05	.04	-.06
Constant	.29***	.07	
Adjusted R Square	.02		
N	730		

Source: 2010 Honduras Benchmark Democracy Survey

<sup>†</sup> $p < .10$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$

Note: Dependent Variable: Support for Procedural Norms of Democracy (Scale from 0 to 1)  
Coefficients from ordinary least squares regression reported.

## Appendix V. Survey Questionnaire

### Benchmark Survey on Democracy in Honduras, 2011

Questionnaire number: \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewer Code: \_\_\_\_\_

#### INTRODUCTION:

Good morning (afternoon), my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a volunteer in the network of Let's Make Democracy (*Hagamos Democracia – HD*) and *Cáritas*. We are running a study to understand the opinions of Hondurans about various matters in our country. Your house has been selected as part of a national random sample of Honduran homes.

**Would you be so kind as to allow me to speak with the adult man (woman) who has most recently had a birthday?**

**(AS YOU SELECT THE PERSON TO BE INTERVIEWED, ENSURE THAT THE PERSON IS A HONDURAN CITIZEN, THAT YOU ARE ALTERNATING INTERVIEWING MEN AND WOMEN, AND THAT THE INTERVIEWEE IS 18 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER. IF THE PERSON TO BE INTERVIEWED IS NOT HONDURAN, EXCUSE YOURSELF AND PROCEED TO THE NEXT HOUSE.)**

This will only take a few minutes. I would like to underscore that your answers are confidential. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. We are only interested in hearing peoples' opinions about these topics. There is no problem at all if you don't know the answer to a question or you simply do not want to answer a question.

#### Date and time of interview:

Day \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

#### Information about the interviewee to be completed by the interviewer:

P1. Department

P2. Municipality \_\_\_\_\_

P3. Location (community, neighborhood, development) \_\_\_\_\_

P3. Type of residential area: 1. \_\_\_urban 2. \_\_\_rural 3. \_\_\_remote

P4. Age \_\_\_\_\_

P5. Sex: 1. \_\_\_male 2. \_\_\_female

**Section A: Satisfaction/National Pride**

A1. Considering all aspects of your life, personally you feel:  
(*READ THE CHOICES*)

- 1. Very happy.....
- 2. Somewhat happy...
- 3. A little happy.....
- 4. Very unhappy.....
- 9.NS/NR.....

A2. How proud do you feel to be Honduras?  
(*READ THE CHOICES*)

- 1. Very proud.....
- 2. Quite proud.....
- 3. Somewhat proud.....
- 4. Not proud at all.....
- 9. NS/NR.....

**Section B: Efficacy/Political Attitudes**

B1. I am going to read to you some things people sometimes say about politicians, the government, or about other people. I'd like you tell me if you very if you very much agree, just agree, disagree, or totally disagree with these opinions. (*SHOW CARD #1*)

		1. I very much agree	2. I Agree	3. I disagree	4. I totally disagree	9.NS/NR
B1.1	I think that the government does not care much about ordinary people.					
B1.2	Politicians are ready to lie to get elected.					
B1.3	People who don't get ahead should blame themselves, not society					
B1.4	Men make better leaders than women					
B1.5	Homosexuals should not hold public office					

B2. For you, what is the most urgent problem Honduras is facing today? (*OPEN-ENDED QUESTION. WRITE DOWN THE FIRST ANSWER GIVEN.*)

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**Section C: Democracy**

C1. If we talk about the way democracy works in our country, how satisfied do you feel about it? *(READ OPTIONS 1 TO 4)*

- 1. Very satisfied \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Very unsatisfied \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Somewhat satisfied \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I believe there is no democracy \_\_\_\_\_ *(DON'T READ)*
- 3. Unsatisfied \_\_\_\_\_ 6. NS/NR \_\_\_\_\_

C2. I am going to read to you some of the things people say about democracy. For each statement, I would like you to tell me if you very much agree, just agree, disagree, or totally disagree. *(SHOW CARD #1)*

		1. I very much agree	2. I Agree	3. I disagree	4. I totally disagree	9.NS/NR
C2.1	In a democracy, the economic system works poorly.					
C2.2	Democracies are instable and there is too much arguing					
C2.3	Democracies are not good to establish order					
C2.4	Democracy may have problems, but it is the best ruling system					

C3. I'd like to know your opinion about what you think the best system would be to rule our country. *(SHOW CARD #1 AND READ OPTIONS)*

		1. I very much agree	2. I agree	3. I disagree	4. I fully disagree	9. NS/NR
C3.1	Having a strong leader who rules with no elections or congress					
C3.2	Having expert decision makers who act following what they think it's best					
C3.3	Having the army ruling the country					
C3.4	Having a democratic political system					

C4. I am going to read some of the things people sometimes express about the political process in Honduras. I would like you to tell me if you very much agree, just agree, disagree, or totally disagree with these opinions. (SHOW CARD #1 AND READ THE CHOICES)

		1. I very much agree	2. I agree	3. I disagree	4. I fully disagree	9. NS/NR
C4.1	Sometimes, violence is necessary as a response to injustice					
C4.2	It is better to move to another country to ensure a better future					
C4.3	Political power is concentrated in the hands of too few people					
C4.4	Dialogue is the best way to solve the problems of the country					

### Section D: Interpersonal and Intergroup Trust

D1. Speaking about the people in your community (neighborhood or village), do you think you can trust most of them or do you have to be careful when dealing with them? (READ OPTIONS, CHECK ONLY ONE OPTION)

1. Most people are reliable.....
2. You have to be very careful.....
9. NS/NR.....

D2. Regarding trust in other people, I want to ask you the following: how much trust do you have in? (SHOW CARD #2)

		1. Complete trust	2. A lot of trust	3. Some trust	4. No trust at all	9. NS/NR
D2.1	Your family					
D2.2	Hondurans					
D2.3	Salvadorians					
D2.4	Guatemalans					
D2.5	Americans (USA)					
D2.6	Cubans					
D2.7	Costa Ricans					
D2.8	Nicaraguans					
D2.9	Venezuelans					

## Section E: Psychological and Cognitive Engagement

E1. How interested are you in politics? (*READ THE CHOICES*)

1. Very interested.....                      3. I am not interested .....
2. Somewhat interested.....                      4. I reject it .....                      9. NS/NR.....

INTERVIEWER: BEFORE ASKING THE NEXT QUESTION, AND WITHOUT DISCUSSING IT WITH THE INTERVIEWEE, JOT DOWN THE NAME OF THE LOCAL MAYOR:\_\_\_\_\_. NOW YOU CAN GRADE EACH RESPONSE BELOW AS CORRECT OR INCORRECT. REMEMBER, DO NOT SAY "CORRECT" OR "INCORRECT" OUT LOUD.

E2. Could you tell me the name of ....?

	1. NS/NR	2. Rightor Wrong
E2.1 The mayor of your town:_____		
E2.2 The President of Honduras _____		
E2.3 The President of the United States: _____		

## Section F: Confidence in Institutions/Political Actors

F1. When you want to find out what is happening in Honduras, where do you find the most reliable sources of information? (*CHOOSE ONLY ONE OPTION*)

1. Radio \_\_\_\_\_
2. TV \_\_\_\_\_
3. Newspaper \_\_\_\_\_
4. Friends or relatives \_\_\_\_\_
5. The Internet \_\_\_\_\_
6. Another source (*WRITE IN*) \_\_\_\_\_
7. NS/NR \_\_\_\_\_

F2. How often do you use that type of media to get the news?

1. Every day
2. 3-4 times a week
3. Once a week
4. Once a month
5. NS/NR

F3. Is there any source of information that you do not trust at all?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (Write in.)
2. I don't trust any.
3. I trust all of them.
4. NS/NR

F4. Now, I am going to mention a number of organizations. I'd like to know how much trust you have in the work they do. (SHOW CARD # 2 AND READ THE CHOICES)

		1. Total trust	2. A lot of trust	3. Some trust	4. No trust	5. NS/NR
F4.1	The National Army					
F4.2	The Supreme Electoral Tribunal					
F4.3	The Media					
F4.4	The Central Government					
F4.5	The National Police					
F4.6	Judges					
F4.7	Political Parties					
F4.8	The Truth Commission					
F4.9	Congressmen					
F4.10	The President					
F4.11	Your Mayor/Municipal Government					
F4.12	Big Businessmen					
F4.13	Human rights committees					
F4.14	Labor unions and peasant organizations					
F4.15	The Catholic Church					
F4.16	The Evangelical Church					
F4.17	The National Resistance Front					
F4.18	The United Nations, UN					
F4.19	The Organization of American States, OAS					

F5. Regarding the last presidential elections held in Honduras in November 2009, how much do you trust that the official results truly reflected the votes cast by the citizens?

1. I fully trust them.....
2. I somewhat trust.....
3. I distrust a little .....
4. I don't trust at all .....
5. NS/NR.....

F6. Now we will use a scale like the one used in a thermometer that goes from 0 to 100 degrees. "0 degrees" means you feel cold or you do not like at all and "100 degrees" means you like it a lot. Using the scale from "0" to "100" tell me how you feel about the following people who frequently appear on the news. If you do not know the person, please tell me. Please choose a number between 0 and 100 that expresses your feeling about:

- |                                    |                  |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Porfirio Lobo _____             | 1.1 NS/NR _____  |
| 2. Elvin Santos _____              | 2.1 NS/NR _____  |
| 3. Ricardo Álvarez _____           | 3.1 NS/NR _____  |
| 4. Manuel Zelaya _____             | 4.1 NS/NR _____  |
| 5. Felicito Ávila _____            | 5.1 NS/NR _____  |
| 6. Bernard Martínez _____          | 6.1 NS/NR _____  |
| 7. César Ham _____                 | 7.1 NS/NR _____  |
| 8. Roberto Micheletti _____        | 8.1 NS/NR _____  |
| 9. Juan Barahona _____             | 9.1 NS/NR _____  |
| 10. Cardenal Oscar Rodríguez _____ | 10.1 NS/NR _____ |
| 11. Carlos H. Reyes _____          | 11.1 NS/NR _____ |
| 12. Israel Salinas _____           | 12.1 NS/NR _____ |
| 13. Romeo Vázquez _____            | 13.1 NS/NR _____ |
| 14. Carlos Flores _____            | 14.1 NS/NR _____ |
| 15. Rafael Leonardo Callejas _____ | 15.1 NS/NR _____ |

F7. Now we will use the same scale so that you tell me how you feel about the following political parties and movements.

- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. Partido Democracia Cristiana (PDC) _____                  | 1.1 NS/NR _____ |
| 2. Partido Unificación Democrática (UD) _____                | 2.1 NS/NR _____ |
| 3. Partido Innovación y Unidad Social Demócrata (PINU) _____ | 3.1 NS/NR _____ |
| 4. Partido Nacional (PN) _____                               | 4.1 NS/NR _____ |
| 5. Partido Liberal (PL) _____                                | 5.1 NS/NR _____ |
| 6. Frente Nacional de Resistencia Popular _____              | 6.1 NS/NR _____ |

F8. Some people think that the voters' list (electoral census) for the last presidential and legislative elections was not updated. How much do you agree with that opinion?

- |                           |                              |               |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. I very much agree..... | 3. I disagree.....           |               |
| 2. I agree...             | 4. I don't trust at all..... | 5. NS/NR..... |

F9. Speaking of the last presidential and legislative elections, do you think that the involvement of international observers was necessary to guarantee transparent elections? (READ OPTIONS)

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. It was really necessary.....             | 3. I doubt they helped..... |
| 2. They helped a little...<br>5. NS/NR..... | 4. They were useless.....   |



F10. If we consider Honduran observers who do not belong to any Political party, how necessary do you think their participation was in safeguarding the last elections? (READ OPTIONS)

- |                                 |                             |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. It was really necessary..... | 3. I doubt they helped..... |
| 2. They helped a little...      | 4. It was useless.....      |
|                                 | 5.NS/NR.....                |

### Section G: Honduran Special Issues

G1. Here is a list of institutions/actors in Honduras. Please tell me how much influence they have. (Scale of 1 to 7, 1 being no influence at all to 7 being extremely influential.) (SHOW CARD #3)

Institution/Actor	1 – no influence at all	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10-extremely influential
G1.1 Churches										
G1.2 TheNationalArmy										
G1.3 PoliticalParties										
G1.4 TheNationalPolice										
G1.5 TheCourts										
G1.6 ThePresident										
G1.7 Congress										
G1.8 Big Business										
G1.9 Unions and PeasantGroups										
G1.10 The Media (TV, radio, newspapers)										
G1.11 The Mayor and Municipal Government										

G2. Here is a list of the same institutions/actors. Now please tell me how much influence they ought to have. (Scale of 1 to 7, 1 being no influence at all to 7 being extremely influential.) (SHOW CARD #3)

Institution/Actor	1 – no influence at all	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10- extremely influential
G2.1 Churches										
G2.2 TheNationalArmy										
G2.3 PoliticalParties										
G2.4 TheNationalPolice										
G2.5 TheCourts										
G2.6 ThePresident										
G2.7 Congress										
G2.8 Big Business										
G2.9 Unions and PeasantGroups										
G2.10 The Media (TV, radio, newspapers)										
G2.11 The Mayor and Municipal Government										

G3. Do you think it would be a good idea to allow for presidential reelection?

1. Yes \_\_\_\_\_
2. No \_\_\_\_\_
3. NS/NR \_\_\_\_\_

G4. Are you aware of efforts to rewrite the whole Constitution?

1. Yes \_\_\_\_\_
2. No \_\_\_\_\_
3. NS/NR \_\_\_\_\_

G5. Do you think it would be a good idea to reform the Constitution?

1. Yes \_\_\_\_\_
2. No \_\_\_\_\_
3. NS/NR \_\_\_\_\_

G6. Now let's turn to questions about some things that might happen in your daily life.

		1. Yes	2. No	9. NS/NR
G6. 1	Has a police officer asked you for a bribe in the last 12 months?			
G6. 2	Has a public employee asked you for a bribe in the last 12 months?			
G6. 3	Do you have a job? If no, mark #9. If yes, ask: Has anyone at work asked you for a bribe in the last 12 months?			
G6. 4	Have you made any request in your local government office in the past 12 months. If no, mark #9. If yes, ask: Have you had to pay any amount above what is legally required?			
G6. 5	Have you had any dealings with the courts in the last 12 months? If no, mark #9. If yes, ask: Have you had to pay a bribe in the courts in the last 12 months?			
G6. 6	Have you used public health facilities in the last 12 months? If no, mark #9. If yes, ask: Have you had to pay a bribe in order to facilitate or receive treatment at the public health facility?			
G6. 7	Have you had a child in school in the last 12 months? If no, mark #9. If yes, ask: Have you had to pay a bribe in the school in the last 12 months?			

G7. Do you think that sometimes it is justified to pay a bribe?

1. Yes \_\_\_\_\_
2. No \_\_\_\_\_
3. NS/NR \_\_\_\_\_

G8. In your experience, corruption among public officials in Honduras is: *(READ OPTIONS)*

1. Very prevalent
2. Somewhat prevalent
3. Pretty rare
4. Very rare
5. NS/NR

G9. Do you think it would be a good idea to make it easier for the creation of new political

parties?

1. Yes \_\_\_\_\_
2. No \_\_\_\_\_
3. NS/NR \_\_\_\_\_

G10. Would you vote for a new party in the next elections?

1. Yes \_\_\_\_\_
2. No \_\_\_\_\_
3. NS/NR \_\_\_\_\_

## Section H: Associational Life and Political Participation

H1. Here is a list of groups and organizations and I'd like you to tell me if you have always, often, sometimes or never participated in the following types of meetings or activities over the past year. (*SHOW CARD #4 AND READ OPTIONS*)

		1. Always	2. Often	3. Sometimes	4. Never	9. NS/NR
H1.1	Church or religious groups					
H1.2	Community improvement board or committee					
H1.3	Sports groups					
H1.4	Unions, workers associations, or professional groups					
H1.5	Political parties					
H1.6	Associations or groups for women or housewives					
H1.7	Parent Associations					

H2. Speaking about citizen participation, people get involved in different ways. I am going to mention some of them (e.g. making a request) and I want you to please tell me if you have ever participated, are willing to do so, or if you would never participate under any circumstance. (*SHOW CARD #5 AND READ OPTIONS*)

		1. I have done it	2. I would do it	3. I would never do it	9. NS/NR
H2.1	Request the government's authority to assist with a community problem				
H2.2	Participate in a legally authorized demonstration				
H2.3	Participate in a strike at your workplace				
H2.4	Support a public protest				

H3. Did you vote in the last presidential elections of November 2009?

1. Yes\_\_\_\_ 2. No\_\_\_\_ (IF THE ANSWER IS NO, GO TO QUESTION H5)

H4. Do you happen to recall which party you voted for in the presidential elections of November 2009? (*DO NOT READ THE OPTIONS*)

1. Cast a blank ballot \_\_\_\_\_
2. Cast a spoiled ballot \_\_\_\_\_
3. Felícito Avila (DC) \_\_\_\_\_
4. César Ham (UD) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Bernard Martínez (PINU) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo Sosa (Partido Nacional) \_\_\_\_\_
7. Elvin Santos (Partido Liberal) \_\_\_\_\_
8. Carlos H. Reyes (Independiente Popular) \_\_\_\_\_
9. Otro (*WRITE IN*) \_\_\_\_\_

H4A. If you had to vote for a different political party, which would have been your second choice? (*WRITE IN*) \_\_\_\_\_

H4B. Is there a particular party for which you would never vote?

1. Yes..... 2. No..... (IF THE ANSWER IS NO, GO TO QUESTION H)

H4C. Which one? (*WRITE IN*) \_\_\_\_\_ (*GO TO QUESTION H6*)

H5. Was there any particular reason that you didn't vote? (*OPEN ENDED; TAKE THE FIRST RESPONSE*)

1. Did not have the ID \_\_\_\_\_
2. Lack of interest \_\_\_\_\_
3. Sickness \_\_\_\_\_
4. Did not find name on the electoral registry \_\_\_\_\_
5. Lack of transportation or distance \_\_\_\_\_
6. I was out of my municipality \_\_\_\_\_
7. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

H6. Do you have a citizen ID card?

1. Yes..... 2. No..... (IF THE ANSWER IS YES, GO TO QUESTION I1)

H7. Have you applied for a citizen ID card?

1. Yes..... 2. No.....

H8. (If yes) When did you request it? \_\_\_\_\_

H9. (If no) Is there a reason why you haven't applied for one? (*WRITE IN*)  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Section I: Socio-demographic Markers

- I1. Are you currently working?  
1. Yes\_\_\_\_\_ 2. No\_\_\_\_\_ 3. NS/NR\_\_\_\_\_
- (IF THE ANSWER IS NO, PASS TO QUESTION I3)
- I2. What do you do? \_\_\_\_\_(WRITE IN)
- I3. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?
0. None\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Technical college\_\_\_\_\_
1. Elementary School \_\_\_\_\_ 5. University\_\_\_\_\_
2. Secondary School \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Postgraduate\_\_\_\_\_
3. Mid-level Technical school \_\_\_\_\_ 7. NS/NR\_\_\_\_\_
- I4. Has any close relative of yours moved to live in another country in the last 5 years? (parents, siblings, spouse, children)
1. Yes\_\_\_\_\_ 2. No\_\_\_\_\_ 3. NS/NR\_\_\_\_\_
- I5. What is your marital status?
1. Single\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Divorced/Separated\_\_\_\_\_
2. Married \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Widow/widower \_\_\_\_\_
3. With a Partner \_\_\_\_\_ 6. NS/NR\_\_\_\_\_
- I6. What is your religion?
1. Catholic\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Other\_\_\_\_\_
2. Evangelical\_\_\_\_\_ 4. None\_\_\_\_\_ 5. NS/NR\_\_\_\_\_
- I7. I am going to show you a card containing different levels of income. Could you provide an estimate of the family income per month of this home? That is to say, the total amount earned by the people who work plus the money received from outside the country (if any). Where would your family be ranked approximately? (SHOW CARD #6)
1. No income
2. Less than L.2,500\_\_\_\_\_
3. L.2,501 a 6,500\_\_\_\_\_
4. L.6,501 a 17,500\_\_\_\_\_
5. L.17,501 a 20,500\_\_\_\_\_
6. More than L.20,501\_\_\_\_\_ 7. NS/NR\_\_\_\_\_

Would you mind giving me a phone number in case we need to reach you for an additional consultation? \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you very much** for your time. Your answers will help us to understand Hondurans better, and we hope they will contribute to improving the political systems in our country.

**Date and time of the end of the interview:**

Day\_\_\_\_ month\_\_\_\_ year \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Observations: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Data Entry Staff Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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