



Shifting Political Cycles: Presidential Elections in Bolivia 2025

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[Abstract] This article describes and analyzes the 2025 presidential elections in Bolivia, a contest held in the context of economic crisis, institutional fragility, and internal fragmentation within the ruling Movement Toward Socialism (MAS). The elections marked a critical turning point in the country's political trajectory, culminating in the party's unprecedented electoral defeat and the activation of the runoff mechanism for the first time since the adoption of the 2009 Constitution. I examine the determinants of electoral support for the Christian Democratic Party (PDC), the unexpected winner of the election, across the first and second rounds. Using municipal-level data, I estimate OLS models to identify the factors associated with PDC vote share and its expansion in the runoff. The results show that PDC support in the first round is positively associated with prior MAS electoral strength, suggesting the defection of former MAS voters. In the runoff, PDC gains are strongly associated with municipalities with high levels of null voting and continued MAS support, indicating that the party successfully mobilized disaffected voters.

[Keywords] Bolivia; presidential elections 2025; electoral behavior; null voting; runoff elections.

[Título] Ciclos electorales cambiantes: elecciones presidenciales 2025 en Bolivia

[Resumen] Este artículo describe y analiza las elecciones presidenciales de 2025 en Bolivia, comicios celebrados en un contexto de crisis económica, fragilidad institucional y fragmentación interna del partido de gobierno, el Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS). Estas elecciones marcaron un punto de inflexión crítico en la trayectoria política del país, pues culminaron en la derrota electoral sin precedentes del partido gobernante y en la activación del mecanismo de segunda vuelta por primera vez desde la adopción de la Constitución de 2009. Examiné los determinantes del apoyo electoral al Partido Demócrata Cristiano (PDC), ganador inesperado de los comicios, tanto en la primera como en la segunda vuelta electoral. A partir de datos a nivel municipal, estimo modelos de mínimos cuadrados ordinarios (MCO) para identificar los factores asociados con el porcentaje de votos obtenido por el PDC y con su expansión en la segunda vuelta. Los resultados muestran que el apoyo al PDC en la primera ronda se asocia de manera positiva con el nivel previo de fortaleza electoral del MAS, lo

que sugiere una defección de votantes anteriormente afines a dicho partido. En la segunda vuelta, el incremento de los votos hacia el PDC se vincula estrechamente con aquellos municipios con altos niveles de voto nulo y un respaldo sostenido al MAS, lo que indica que el partido logró movilizar exitosamente a las y los votantes descontentos.

[Palabras clave] Bolivia, elecciones presidenciales 2025, comportamiento electoral, voto nulo, segunda vuelta.

[Título] Mudança nos ciclos políticos: eleições presidenciais na Bolívia em 2025

[Resumen] Este artigo descreve e analisa as eleições presidenciais de 2025 na Bolívia, um pleito realizado em meio a uma crise econômica, fragilidade institucional e fragmentação interna do partido situacionista Movimento al Socialismo (MAS). As eleições marcaram um ponto de viragem crítico na trajetória política do país, culminando na derrota eleitoral inédita do partido e na ativação do mecanismo de segundo turno pela primeira vez desde a adoção da Constituição de 2009. Examinamos os determinantes do apoio eleitoral ao Partido Demócrata Cristiano (PDC), o vencedor inesperado da eleição, ao longo do primeiro e do segundo turnos. Utilizando dados em nível municipal, estimamos modelos de Mínimos Quadrados Ordinários (MQO) para identificar os fatores associados à proporção de votos recebidos pelo PDC e à sua expansão no segundo turno. Os resultados mostram que o apoio ao PDC no primeiro turno está positivamente associado ao desempenho eleitoral prévio do MAS, o que sugere a deserção de eleitores que antes votavam no MAS. No segundo turno, os ganhos do PDC estão fortemente associados a municípios com altos índices de votos nulos e com a manutenção do apoio ao MAS, indicando que o partido conseguiu mobilizar com sucesso eleitores descontentes.

[Palavras-chave] Bolívia, eleições presidenciais de 2025, comportamento eleitoral, voto nulo, segundo turno eleitoral.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The 2025 general elections in Bolivia constituted a historic event, unfolding amid a profound and multifaceted crisis. The electoral landscape was decisively shaped by the internal divisions and the institutional weakening of the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS-IPSP), which ultimately culminated in the party's decisive first-round defeat on August 17. This loss not only marked a dramatic rupture in MAS's two-decade hegemony as Bolivia's dominant political force but also facilitated the reemergence of right-wing political actors. The shifting fortunes of the MAS reverberated throughout the electoral process, influencing both the configuration of the candidate offering and the composition of the electorate. Moreover, the October 19 runoff marked a significant institutional milestone. For the first time since the adoption of the 2009 Constitution—and following several electoral cycles in which MAS secured more than 50 percent of the vote in the first round—the second-round mechanism was activated. With no presidential ticket achieving an outright majority, the runoff was triggered within a competitive context, underscoring a new phase in Bolivia's electoral dynamics.

The challenges experienced by the MAS in its organizational structure and party dynamics, and largely as a consequence thereof, coincided with a widespread and acute economic crisis. Rising prices, currency shortages, and long queues for fuel became everyday symbols of an economic contraction originating in the collapse of international gas prices in 2014. In the years since, the downturn has steadily worsened, driven by declining hydrocarbon production and mounting fiscal deficits, with its consequences becoming both visible and undeniable by early 2023 (TRIGO 2024). By the time the 2025 elections approached, the crisis had placed severe strain on households across the country. Economic recovery emerged as the central concern of the electorate, eclipsing other issues and shaping the contours of political competition.

The political and economic crisis was further compounded by a context of pronounced institutional fragility. In the first round of the electoral process, this fragility manifested itself in two principal ways. Most critically, the electoral process itself was called into question, generating uncertainty about the rules governing the contest. Simultaneously, judicial interventionism undermined the authority and operational capacity of the Plurinational Electoral Body (Órgano Electoral Plurinacional, OEP), the institution

mandated to administer and safeguard electoral processes. This occurred in a country where the electoral body is constitutionally recognized as the fourth branch of government, alongside the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. From the outset, a series of constitutional actions and legal appeals challenged key aspects of the process, including the official call for elections, candidate registrations, and the legal status of political parties, among other issues (URGENTE.BO 2025). These disputes blurred institutional boundaries and heightened perceptions of procedural instability. The case of Andronico Rodríguez and the Movimiento Tercer Sistema (MTS) illustrates these dynamics. Rodríguez, then president of the Senate and initially regarded as the political heir to former President Evo Morales and MAS, ultimately launched his candidacy under the MTS banner after breaking with Morales. Yet his participation remained uncertain for several weeks: his candidacy was first suspended by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (Tribunal Supremo Electoral, TSE) and subsequently reinstated by the Plurinational Constitutional Tribunal (Tribunal Constitucional Plurinacional, TCP). Rodríguez's inclusion reshaped the electoral landscape ahead of the first round and mitigated the potential exclusion of a competitive alternative to the MAS.

It is worth emphasizing that, despite the mounting challenges described above—or, in some respects, partly due to them—both rounds of the election unfolded in a climate of relative peace and high voter participation (EUROPEAN UNION ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION 2025). Notably, even actors who regarded themselves as disadvantaged by institutional decisions ultimately chose to remain within the electoral arena, channeling their grievances through formal mechanisms, whether by casting valid votes or submitting null ballots. The broad acceptance of the results across the political spectrum further reinforced the legitimacy of the process. In this respect, the elections not only fulfilled their procedural function but also served as a central mechanism for conflict management and resolution—a notable achievement within the Bolivian context.

In the following sections, I examine the most salient features of the 2025 presidential contest. While placing particular emphasis on the dynamics of the first round, I also provide a brief empirical analysis of the factors associated with electoral support for the PDC—the unexpected winner of the 2025 elections—in both rounds.

2. BACKGROUND

Bolivia's general elections are concurrent, meaning that voters elect the presidential ticket and all members of the Plurinational Legislative Assembly (both the 130-member Chamber of Deputies and the 36-member Senate) on the same day. In this article, I focus my analysis on the presidential race. The electoral rules for the presidential election in Bolivia follow a modified two-round majority system. The presidential ticket that obtains more than 50% of the valid votes cast, or at least 40% of the valid votes with a minimum difference of 10 percentage points, is declared the winner in the first round.¹ A second round, or runoff, is called only when neither of the two conditions is met. Only the two tickets with the most votes in the first round participate in the runoff, with the winner being the one that obtains a simple majority.² It is worth mentioning that the outcome of the runoff does not alter the composition of the legislature as determined in the first round.³ In the August 17 election, neither of the most-voted parties managed to meet the conditions to avoid a runoff—the PDC obtained 32.06% and Alianza Libre 26.70%—and their respective tickets thus faced each other in the runoff on October 19 (OEP 2025a). As noted above, the runoff election marked an institutional milestone in Bolivian democratic practice.

Regarding the country's party system, its configuration during the first round of the electoral process was marked by fragmentation across both left- and right-wing parties. While the breakup of the left—driven by internal strife and the eventual division within the MAS—represented the most novel development in the 2025 contest, the fragmentation of the right has been a longstanding feature of the country's party system (R.A. MAYORGA 2003; CENTELLAS 2009). Although there were early indications of a unity agreement among the main right-wing contenders to promote a single candidate and concentrate the vote, the coalition dissolved in less than four months due to disputes over the leadership of the presidential ticket (SEAS 2025). The result was a significantly weakened leftist offering alongside the predominance of a fragmented right-wing bloc.

1 Bolivia. Ley No. 026, Ley de Régimen Electoral, capítulo III, sección I, artículo 52, inciso II. June 30, 2010. <https://bit.ly/4cgRHKr>

2 Bolivia. Ley No. 026, Ley de Régimen Electoral, capítulo III, sección I, artículo 53.

3 Bolivia. Ley No. 026, Ley de Régimen Electoral, capítulo III, sección II, artículo 54.

One feature of the party system that, while not new, proved highly relevant in this election was the dynamic of “apparent parties”—political organizations that are legally registered and possess a valid acronym with the electoral tribunal but lack a genuine organizational structure, internal democratic life, or a solid social base (ZEGADA *ET AL.* 2021). A notable example is the Frente para la Victoria (FPV), which former President Evo Morales attempted to use to run for office after losing the leadership of the MAS; this effort failed when the electoral tribunal revoked the party’s legal status. Similarly, the PDC, which registered the eventual winning ticket of Paz-Lara, had previously served as the electoral vehicle for his main contender—Jorge Quiroga—in the 2014 national elections (EL DIARIO 2014).

3. CANDIDATES AND ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Although the electoral tribunal initially approved ten presidential tickets, following the disqualification of James Dunn and the withdrawal of Eva Copa—mayor of the city of El Alto—from the race, eight tickets ultimately competed in the first round. The leftist electoral offering was reduced to two candidates: (i) Andronico Rodríguez, then president of the Senate, representing the Alianza Popular (AP); and (ii) Eduardo del Castillo, former government minister in the Luis Arce administration, representing the ruling party (MAS). The broader electoral offering materialized on the right and center-right, represented mainly by former president Jorge Quiroga (Libre) and businessman Samuel Doria Medina (Unidad Nacional – UN), respectively. Also positioned within this offering were Manfred Reyes Villa with SUMATE, Jhonny Fernandez (Unidad Cívica Solidaridad – UCS), Rodrigo Paz (PDC), and Pavel Aracena Vargas (Acción Democrática Nacionalista – ADN).

The country’s current situation partially displaced traditional cleavages. Instead, election campaigns centered on two main factors: the economic crisis and the role of the MAS as the ruling party, which had contributed to both economic instability and institutional fragility. Consequently, the principal themes of the campaigns focused on changing the economic model to address the financial contraction, reforming the political model that the MAS had led over the past two decades, and restoring institutional integrity, including reforms to the justice system. Campaign messages from the various political forces directly targeted voters’ foremost concern: economic well-being. Data

from LatinoBarómetro indicate that this concern had been rising steadily since 2017, when 8.6% of respondents identified economic or financial problems as the country's most important issue. By 2024, this figure had surged to a historic high of 39.5% (CORPORACIÓN LATINOBARÓMETRO 2026).

As the election approached, polls showed that the race was concentrated between two traditional and long-standing figures in Bolivian politics: Jorge Quiroga Velasco (Libre) and Samuel Doria Medina (UN). Both had run for national office on multiple occasions without ever surpassing the level of support received by Evo Morales, then-leader of the MAS. Although both candidates belong to the right, Doria Medina occupies a more centrist and moderate position, while Quiroga represents the more conservative wing of the right. Yet, while the polls narrowed the race to Quiroga and Doria Medina, the undecided vote remained above 10% in several surveys, introducing high volatility among the electorate, many of whom reported making their decision on election day (LIZÁRRAGA ALVARADO 2025; HARRISON 2025).

One notable feature was the campaign for null votes promoted by former President Evo Morales, who was permanently disqualified from the electoral race by a constitutional ruling prohibiting continuous or discontinuous reelection after two terms (CORREO DEL SUR DIGITAL 2024). Although the former president mobilized his supporters in protests that lasted more than two weeks to make his candidacy viable (AGENCIA DE NOTICIAS FIDES 2025), by promoting the null vote as a last resort, his grievances and those of his supporters ended up being channeled through the electoral contest.

4. RESULTS

The results of the first round marked a definitive end to the MAS's hegemony as the ruling party.⁴ The internal conflicts and divisions within the party culminated in a crushing electoral defeat. The party, which had accumulated electoral gains of more than 50% in all elections since its rise to power in 2005, barely reached 3.2% of the vote in the first round (OEP 2025a).

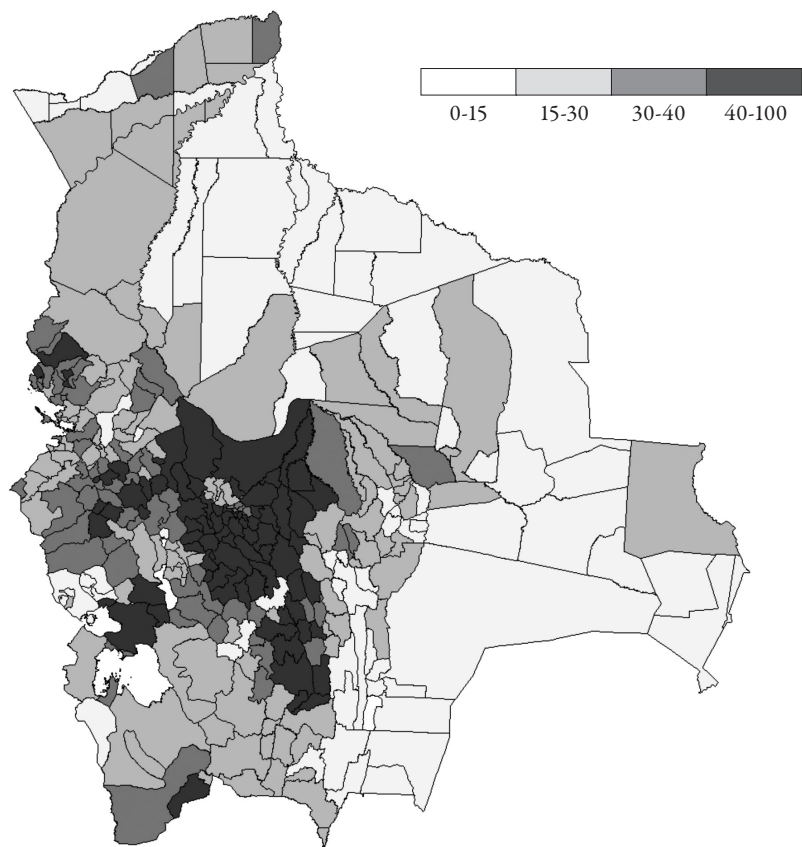
⁴ It should be noted that the electoral weakening of the MAS was already evident in the 2021 subnational elections, in which, despite retaining support in rural municipalities, the party lost ground in capital cities and in municipalities that were previously strongholds of support. Fernando Mayorga (2022) and René Mayorga (2003) provide a discussion of the crisis and subsequent weakening of the MAS.

The PDC's victory—achieved with a five-percentage-point lead over Jorge Quiroga Velasco—came as a surprise. In the weeks, and even days, leading up to the election, voting intention polls had identified Libre and UN as the main contenders. Although some surveys showed the PDC gaining ground, occasionally placing it in third place (IJURKO 2025), its decisive victory well ahead of Libre and UN was both resounding and unexpected. Rodrigo Paz's success with the PDC can be attributed to several factors, including the high volatility of voter preferences throughout the campaign, his platform of political renewal beyond the MAS/anti-MAS narrative, and his advocacy for a moderate economic reform that avoided both the statism of the MAS and the neoliberalism of the traditional elites. Crucially, his running mate, Edman Lara, helped attract support from former MAS sympathizers who were unwilling to vote for the traditional right (JÁUREGUI 2025). In the following sections, I explore empirically the characteristics associated with support for the PDC in both the first round and the runoff.

Noteworthy are the results of the null vote. Historically, the share of null votes in the country has remained around 5%. In the 2025 elections, however, this figure increased substantially, reaching 19.6% of the votes cast, just behind the third place (UN) with 19.8% of the votes (OEP 2025b). This rise can be partly explained by the null vote campaign promoted by Morales, at least part of which represents his loyal electoral base. Although this level of support is not comparable to the national majorities that the former president commanded during his tenure, he continues to enjoy strong support in several municipalities, particularly in the department of Cochabamba. As illustrated in Figure 1, in several municipalities the percentage of null votes exceeded 50%, reaching a maximum of 84% in the municipality of Villa Tunari, the former president's union and political stronghold. While this figure remained symbolic at the national level, it may have important implications for the subnational elections scheduled for March 2026. Furthermore, as shown below, the mobilization of the null vote is crucial for understanding the outcome of the runoff election.

FIGURE 1

Share of Null Votes by Municipality



Source: Own elaboration based on OEP (2025b)

To understand the factors associated with electoral support for the PDC in both the first round and the runoff, I conducted OLS regressions using electoral data from the Plurinational Electoral Body and census data from 2024 (OEP 2025b; INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE ESTADÍSTICA 2025). The unit of analysis is the municipality. In the models for the first round, the dependent variable is the percentage of valid votes cast for the PDC, which measures electoral support for this party at the municipal level. The explanatory variables include

population, age, rural-urban indicators, the share of indigenous population by self-identification, a poverty index measured by unmet basic needs, and the share of votes obtained by the MAS in the same municipality in the 2020 presidential elections. For the runoff models, the dependent variable is the difference in the share of votes for the PDC between the first and second rounds, which measures the PDC's expansion beyond its first-round base. In addition to the sociodemographic variables already mentioned, these models also include the share of votes won by the PDC in the first round to account for the ceiling effect—municipalities where the PDC performed particularly well in the first round have less room for growth in the runoff—as well as the share of votes for the MAS and UN in the first round and the share of null votes, in order to evaluate the transfer of votes from the first round to the runoff. Summary statistics are provided at the end of the article.⁵

Models 1 and 2 present the analysis of the first round on August 17. The dependent variable in these models is the share of votes won by the PDC, which captures the party's electoral performance at the municipal level. The results reveal a strong positive association between 2020 MAS's electoral performance and PDC electoral support in the 2025 first round. A one-percentage-point increase in MAS vote share in 2020 is associated with a 0.351 percentage-point increase in the PDC vote share. This finding offers some evidence that—as briefly mentioned above—the PDC's victory in the first round can be partly explained by the support of former MAS voters. The results further indicate that PDC support was weaker in larger municipalities and cities, although this effect is less stable across different model specifications. Finally, the findings show a negative association between the poverty index and PDC support: a one-percentage-point increase in poverty is associated with a 0.255-percentage-point decrease in electoral support for the party.

5 All models incorporate robust standard errors to account for heteroskedasticity, as well as department fixed effects to account for regional differences. Additionally, models 2 and 4 employ department-cluster standard errors to address error correlation at the department level. Across the different model specifications, the key independent variables remain robust.

TABLE 1
Factors associated with electoral support for the PDC

	1st round DV: PDC vote share		Runoff DV: PDC vote share difference	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Political variables				
MAS vote share 2020 elections	0.351*** (0.054)	0.351** (0.148)	-	-
MAS vote share 1 st round	-	-	0.337*** (0.129)	0.337** (0.141)
Null vote share 1 st round	-	-	0.499*** (0.036)	0.499*** (0.035)
UN vote share 1 st round	-	-	-0.227** (0.094)	-0.227 (0.127)
PDC vote share 1 st round	-	-	-0.604*** (0.043)	-0.604*** (0.086)
Sociodemographic variables				
Population (ln)	-1.888* (0.976)	-1.888 (1.067)	-1.513*** (0.524)	-1.513** (0.578)
Rural (base)				
Small town	0.341 (1.782)	0.341 (1.572)	2.321** (1.110)	2.321** (0.836)
Suburban	2.428 (2.279)	2.428 (2.274)	1.375 (1.331)	1.375 (1.175)
Urban	5.104 (4.321)	5.104 (4.058)	0.724 (2.238)	0.724 (1.266)
Poverty index	-0.255*** (0.035)	-0.255*** (0.050)	0.111*** (0.026)	0.111** (0.039)
Indigenous population	0.080* (0.041)	0.080 (0.078)	0.047 (0.033)	0.047 (0.051)
Age 40-59 (base)				
Age 18-39	0.405 (0.263)	0.405 (0.258)	0.113 (0.175)	0.113 (0.160)
Age 60+	0.453 (0.334)	0.453 (0.321)	0.082 (0.224)	0.082 (0.212)
Constant	10.149 (20.172)	10.149 (21.929)	41.789*** (14.451)	41.789** (12.983)

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	1st round DV: PDC vote share		Runoff DV: PDC vote share difference	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
R-squared	0.805	0.805	0.860	0.860
Department fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	339	339	339	339
Note: * p<0.05, ** p<0.05 (clustered), *** p<0.01				

Source: Own elaboration

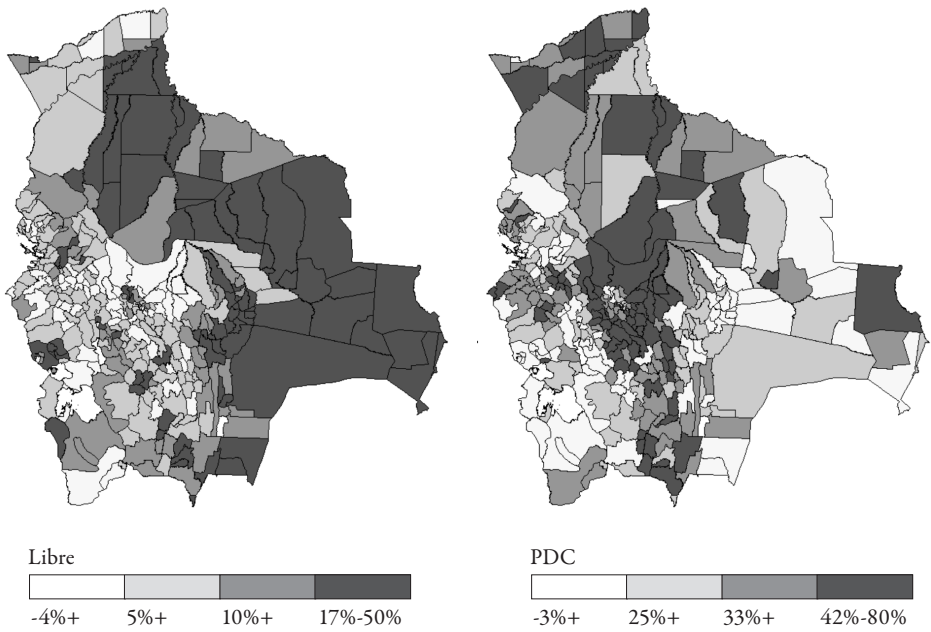
In the runoff models, the dependent variable is the change in PDC vote share from the first to the second round. The negative coefficient on first-round PDC vote share (-0.604) indicates a ceiling effect: municipalities in which the PDC was already strong in the first round had less room to gain additional votes in the runoff. Conversely, the coefficient suggests that PDC gains in the runoff were larger in municipalities where first-round support for the party was low, meaning that the PDC successfully expanded into new municipalities rather than merely consolidating its existing base.

The results further indicate that the share of null votes in the first round was the single largest contributor to PDC runoff growth. As Figure 2 illustrates (compared to Figure 1), the PDC’s largest gains were recorded in municipalities where the null vote was greater in the first round. The second most important association is with MAS first-round votes: municipalities with higher levels of support for MAS in the first round experienced greater gains for the PDC.

Unlike Libre, the PDC was able to rally not only former 2020 MAS voters in the first round, but also those who continued to support MAS in the first round of 2025, as well as Morales’s loyalists who cast null votes. It is also noteworthy, as shown in Figure 2, that the vote share difference in the runoff is considerably larger for the PDC than for Libre. Whereas Libre’s largest increase in the runoff was 42%, the PDC surpassed 70% in several municipalities—particularly those where null votes were most numerous in the first round. Thus, while the PDC expanded its territorial reach, Libre was unable to move beyond its traditional stronghold in the northeastern departments.

FIGURE 2

PDC and Libre vote share difference between first round and runoff



Source: Own elaboration based on OEP (2025b)

Despite Doria Medina’s public endorsement of de PDC following its unexpected first-round victory, the results show a modest negative effect: in municipalities where UN was strong in the first round, PDC experienced smaller gains in the runoff. This finding offers suggestive evidence that UN voters largely did not switch to the PDC—or did so at significantly lower rates than MAS voters—and instead leaned towards Libre. The negative association between population and support for PDC persists in the runoff models, yet this relationship now achieves statistical significance across specifications. While Libre had already captured several capital cities in the first round, it consolidated its hold on nearly all of them in the runoff, with the exception of Oruro. Conversely, the results show a strong positive association between smaller municipalities and electoral support for the PDC. Notably, the effect of

poverty reverses in the runoff: although poorer municipalities were associated with decreased support for the PDC in the first round, the party performed better in these areas in the runoff.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The 2025 presidential elections marked a decisive turning point in Bolivia's political trajectory. A context of sharp economic deterioration, institutional fragility, and internal fragmentation within the ruling party produced a significant reconfiguration of political power, altering the landscape that prevailed since the rise of the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS). The party's collapse—from consistent first-round majorities over two decades to a marginal single-digit figure well below 5%—signaled not merely an electoral defeat, but the exhaustion of a hegemonic cycle.

The statistical analyses show that former MAS strongholds, along with municipalities with high rates of null voting in the first round, became central to the PDC's growth in the runoff. This suggests that the party's appeal capitalized on voter disaffection, particularly among those unwilling to support either the ruling party or the traditional conservative alternative. More broadly, the 2025 elections illustrate a major electoral defeat for the MAS and may signal a shift away from dominant-party dynamics. The subnational elections scheduled for 2026 will be critical in assessing whether this pattern reflects a more durable transformation of the party system.

The economic crisis served as the principal structuring issue of the campaign, displacing traditional ideological cleavages and opening space for cross-cutting appeals centered on economic stabilization and institutional reform. The PDC's victory thus reflects both retrospective economic voting and a broader demand for political renewal.

APPENDIX

TABLE A1

Summary statistics

Unit of analysis: municipality				
Observations = 339 municipalities	Mean	SD	Max	Min
Dependent variables				
PDC vote share 1st round (%)	39.79	17.57	73.28	3.15
PDC vote share difference 2nd round (%)	33.54	13.44	79.92	-2.92
Sociodemographic variables				
Poverty index (%)	50.98	20.37	94.63	6.99
Population (ln)	9.45	1.12	14.29	6.77
Indigenous population (%)	57.34	26.89	94.31	2.76
Urban-rural	2.43	0.89	4	1
Age 18-39	50.45	7.49	67.83	31.20
Age 40-59	30.7	2.21	37.14	24.90
Age 60+	18.85	6.17	35.72	7.02
Political variables				
MAS vote share 1st round (%)	4.57	2.80	23.19	.66
UN vote share 1st round (%)	12.62	12.79	69.23	.88
Null vote share 1st round (%)	29.62	16.62	84.1	4.9
MAS vote share 2020 elections (%)	71.76	22.20	99.22	14.43

Source: Own elaboration

MODEL DIAGNOSTICS

I conducted a series of robustness checks to assess the stability and reliability of the results. Diagnostic tests are performed on the fully specified model (Model 3), which includes the complete set of explanatory variables. Because Models 2 and 4 differ only in the estimation of standard errors, the diagnostic results are identical. Simpler specifications (Models 1 and 2) yield substantively similar patterns, and the diagnostic conclusions remain unchanged.

First, I examined potential multicollinearity among the explanatory variables using variance inflation factors (VIF). Mean VIF values are 5.40 and 5.55 across specifications, indicating moderate multicollinearity overall. Higher VIF values are observed for age composition variables (approximately 18–21), reflecting their mechanical interdependence; however, VIF values for the main explanatory variables—particularly electoral vote shares—remain within acceptable ranges (generally below 7).

Second, I evaluated model specification using Ramsey RESET tests, which do not indicate functional form misspecification ($F(3, 315) = 1.26, p = 0.288$). Visual inspection of residuals further supports the adequacy of the linear specification, as no systematic patterns are observed. Additionally, all models are estimated using robust and clustered standard errors at the department level to account for heteroskedasticity and within-cluster correlation.

Finally, I assessed the influence of extreme observations using Cook's distance. The average Cook's distance is 0.004, with a maximum value of 0.113, well below commonly used thresholds for problematic influence. Using the conventional cutoff ($4/N \approx 0.012$), approximately 8.9% of observations are identified as potentially influential. Re-estimating the models after excluding these observations yields substantively similar results: coefficients retain their expected signs, magnitudes remain stable, and statistical significance is largely unchanged. For instance, the coefficient for MAS vote share remains positive and statistically significant (increasing from 0.34 to 0.36), the effect of null vote share remains strong and positive (approximately 0.50 to 0.45), and the negative effect of competing party vote share becomes more pronounced. Taken together, these checks provide strong evidence that the findings are not driven by model misspecification, multicollinearity among key variables, or influential observations.

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VANIA XIMENA VELASCO GUACHALLA: conceptualization, investigation, methodology, writing (original draft), writing (review & editing).

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