



## Bolivia — Va-PoReg Country Report

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[officially known as the Plurinational State of Bolivia]

08/06/1825 Start Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy: On 08/06/1825, after the Bolivian War of Independence from Spain, the Declaration of Independence was issued.<sup>1</sup> On 07/21/1844, its independence was recognized by Spain. From 1850 onward, direct elections with restricted suffrage became the norm. The criteria for voting encompassed possessing a minimum level of property, income, or engagement in one of the professions, while individuals ‘in domestic service’ were prohibited from voting. This effectively led to the exclusion of indigenous peoples from participating in the electoral process.<sup>2</sup> Another restriction was literacy, which had been enshrined in the constitution of 1826 and maintained up until the constitution of 1945 (Engerman/Sokoloff 2005: 912). According to our observations, only non-multiparty legislative elections were present until 1904 with the first presidential elections. From 1904 onwards, we classify multiparty legislative and executive elections as present which aligns with the observations of LIED. LIED classifies the elections as not competitive. V-Dem’s EF&FI scores all elections up to this point as neither free nor fair while their CEI scores them as not clean. According to the consensus of BMR, RoW, LIED the electoral regime cannot be considered democratic. Political liberties are classified as absent by LIED and not really present by V-Dem’s PCLI for this period. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive encountered slight limitations on decision-making power imposed by other institutions. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem’s JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, and V-Dem’s LCE is similarly interpreted as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also limited.

07/11[&12]/1920 End Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy/Start Non-Electoral Transitional Regime: In a bloodless coup, the Republican Party overthrew President José Gutiérrez Guerra from the Liberal Party.<sup>3</sup> The Congress, elected in May 1920, was prevented from taking office. Bautista Saavedra became president. Immediately after the coup, the Republican Party split into two new parties, the Republican Socialist Party led by Bautista Saavedra and the Genuine Republican Party, led by Daniel Salamanca.<sup>4</sup>

11/14/1920 End Non-Electoral Transitional Regime/Start Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy: On this date, a new National Congress was elected. On 01/24 the National Congress elected Bautista Saavedra President of the Republic.<sup>5</sup> While the regime was an electoral autocracy it came close to a one-party autocracy. The Republican Party won 60 out of 63 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and all seats in the Senate. Saavedra expelled leaders from the Genuine Republican Party from the country and used extra-constitutional means to remain in power. Moreover, he annulled the 1925 elections due to technicalities and set up Hernando Siles and his own brother Abdón Saavedra for the repeated election. In 1926 Saavedra chose Hernando Siles, the founder of the Nationalist Party, as his successor.<sup>6</sup> The restricted voting rights continued to exist in this period. These included property, income, and literacy requirements, Engerman, 2005 #43866: 912}.<sup>7</sup> Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. LIED classifies the elections as not competitive. V-Dem’s EF&FI scores all elections up to this point as neither free nor fair while their CEI scores them as not clean. Political liberties are classified as absent by LIED and can be interpreted as not really present by V-Dem’s PCLI for this period. As per Polity5’s classification, the executive’s authority was subject to minor institutional constraints during this

time. During this regime period, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also limited.

05/28/1930 End Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy/Start Military Autocracy: In 1930 Siles tried to stay in office after his tenure expired.<sup>8</sup> This led to a military coup on this date led by General Carlos Blanco Galindo. He replaced Siles (Whitehead 1991: 513, Lentz 1999: 52-53, Casey et al. 2020: 2).<sup>9</sup> As per Polity5's classification, the executive's authority was subject to minor institutional constraints during this time. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, and V-Dem's LCE is similarly interpreted as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also limited. According to our observations, no multiparty legislative and executive elections were held during this period, which aligns the observations of LIED. LIED identifies political liberties as absent, while V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as indicating that political liberties are not really present.

03/05/1931 End Military Autocracy/Start Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy: On this date Blanco Galindo's regime ended after an election resulted in Daniel Salamanca's victory" (Lentz 1999: 53, Casey et al. 2020: 2). Despite his earlier championing of clean elections, Salamanca engaged in similar electoral fraud and manipulation as his predecessors. On 11/27/1934, during the disastrous Chaco War (July 1932- June 1935), the elected republican president Daniel Salamanca was overthrown in a military coup and replaced by his liberal Vice President José Luis Tejada. (Centeno 2002: 58, Klein 2011: 169, 171, 178-79, 181-82).<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the coup effectively annulled the general elections held on 11/11/1934.<sup>11</sup> Voting rights remained restricted. The property requirements were only lifted in 1938, but literacy requirements remained (Engerman/Sokoloff 2005: 912).<sup>12</sup> Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. The 1931 elections were the first Bolivian elections that LIED classifies as competitive. V-Dem's CEI indicates no clean elections. Moreover, not really free and fair election conditions were achieved (V-Dem EF&FI). Political liberties are classified as absent by LIED and as not really present by V-Dem's PCLI for this period. Based on Polity5's assessment, the executive faced slight limitations on power during this period. From 1932 to 1935, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, and V-Dem's LCE is similarly interpreted as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also limited. For 1936, V-Dem's JCE indicates that judicial constraints on the executive are limited. At the same time, V-Dem's LCE shows no value, which, with appropriate caution, can be interpreted as an absence of legislative constraints on the executive.

05/17/1936 End Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy/Start Military Autocracy: In a big labor strike, Germán Busch demanded Tejada Sorzano to be deposed. Shortly after the military overthrew the government of Tejada, a military junta was established in which Busch was interim president. On 05/22/1936 General David Toro became president of new junta.<sup>13</sup> On 07/13/1937, after a coup d'état, David Toro was deposed and Germán Busch became president of the junta.<sup>14</sup> However, this was a continuation of the military autocracy. The coup led by General David Toro resulted in the end of President Salamanca's term and the beginning of military rule in Bolivia. Colonel David Toro and Colonel German Busch ousted Tejada from power in May 1936.(Klein 2011: 181, 187, Casey et al. 2020: 3). On 04/15/1940, following Busch's suicide, the Army's high command, under General Carlos Quintanilla and having gradually sidelined 'radical' officers, orchestrated a transition back to civilian governance (Klein 2011: 194-95, Casey et al. 2020: 3). General Enrique Penaranda, backed by a coalition of traditional parties (Liberal-Republican alliance) opposing the left, emerged victorious in the 1940 elections. His administration subsequently shut down left-wing publications and suppressed labor organizing (Klein 2011: 196, 199-200, Casey et al. 2020: 3). All traditional parties endorsed General Enrique Penaranda, which is why we do not consider the elections free and fair and thus do not classify this regime period an electoral autocracy.<sup>15</sup> According to our observations, multiparty legislative and executive elections were present after the 1953 elections. Before, we classify them as absent, which aligns

with the observations of LIED. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive held unlimited authority with no institutionalized constraints on decision-making power. For the year 1937, V-Dem's JCE indicates that judicial constraints on the executive are limited. At the same time, V-Dem's LCE shows no value, which, with appropriate caution, can be interpreted as an absence of legislative constraints on the executive. From 1938 to 1942, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were absent. For 1943, V-Dem's JCE indicates that judicial constraints on the executive are limited. At the same time, V-Dem's LCE shows no value, which, with appropriate caution, can be interpreted as an absence of legislative constraints on the executive. Moreover, political liberties were absent (LIED) and can be interpreted as not really present following V-Dem's PCLI.

12/20/1943 End Military Autocracy/Start Military Autocracy: A coup d'état of nationalist junior officers led by Major Gualberto Villarroel overthrew General Peñaranda and brought to power a junta headed by Villarroel (Klein 1969: 368-670, Corbett 1972: 403, Times 1943).<sup>16</sup> From March to December 1944, under US pressure, the MNR was barred from the cabinet, yet it maintained its alliance with the government and retained political significance (Klein 1969: 373, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 45-46). Junior officers executed a coup d'état, ousting Peñaranda (Whitehead 1991: 526, Klein 2011: 201, Casey et al. 2020: 3). According to our observations, no multiparty legislative and executive elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive held unlimited authority with no institutionalized constraints on decision-making power. For the years 1944 and 1945, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were absent. For the following year, V-Dem's JCE indicates that judicial constraints on the executive are limited. At the same time, V-Dem's LCE shows no value, which, with appropriate caution, can be interpreted as an absence of legislative constraints on the executive. Political liberties were absent per LIED and V-Dem PCLI indicates that they were not really present.

07/21/1946 End Military Autocracy/Start Non-Electoral Transitional Regime: An enraged armed mob of civilians and some military elements stormed Villarroel's palace, brutally murdered him and hung him up on the street. The mob appointed Néstor Guillén to the role of acting president (Klein 1969: 382, Corbett 1972: 403, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 45-46). The civil junta consisted of labor, teacher, and student representatives as well as magistrates of the Superior District Court of La Paz.<sup>17</sup> LIED identifies political liberties as absent, while V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as showing that political liberties are not truly present. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were absent.

01/05/1947 End Non-Electoral Autocratic Transitional (Non-Party) Regime/Start Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy: On this date general elections were held, which were won by the Republican Socialist Unity Party, which was despite its name a conservative party (Klein 1969: 382).<sup>18</sup> We agree with GWF that this period was oligarchic. There were severe suffrage limitations, that excluded illiterates. This prevented a huge part of the population from voting. It is estimated that in 1951 only 7% of the population or 28% of adult males were able to vote (Klein 1969: 404, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 46). On 10/22/1949 José Enrique Hertzog Garaizabal was forced to resign by his own party after losing the parliamentary elections of 1949, officially for health reasons. His vice-president Mamerto Urriolagoitia Harriague took over. His presidency was characterized by harsh repression of the opposition.<sup>19</sup> He is regarded as the final constitutional president of the predominantly oligarchic social and political system.<sup>20</sup> On 05/06/1951 limited participation elections resulted in the victory of a leftist candidate Victor Paz Estenssoro (while remaining in exile in Argentina). He was the founder and leader of the National Revolutionary movement (MNR), which was officially banned at the time. According to our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. LIED classifies the elections as not competitive. V-Dem's EF&FI scores all

elections up to this point as neither free nor fair while their CEI scores them as not clean. Political liberties are classified as absent by LIED and as not really present by V-Dem's PCLI for this period. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive held unlimited authority with no institutionalized constraints on decision-making power. During this regime period, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, whereas V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were absent.

05/16/1951 End Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy/Start Military Autocracy: On this date, a military coup led by General Hugo Ballivián Rojas took place. The military established a junta led by Roja and annulled the results of the election fearing that the leftist candidate Paz Estenssoro becomes president (Klein 1969: 399f, Marshall 2018d, Alexander 1982: 178-179, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 46).<sup>21</sup> According to our observations, no multiparty legislative and executive elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. As per Polity5's classification, the executive's authority was significantly constrained by institutional checks during this time. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were absent. LIED identifies political liberties as absent, while V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as indicating that political liberties are not really present.

04/09[-11]/1952 End Military Autocracy/Start Electoral Autocracy: The MNR launched a three-day armed rebellion which ended with the defeat of General Ballivián and loyalist military forces. Víctor Paz Estenssoro, the winner of the 1951 limited suffrage election, took over the presidency. Under the presidency of Paz Estenssoro, universal suffrage was granted by decree in 1952, suffrage was extended to women and illiterates before the next election. However, the regime is not coded as democratic because of violence against the opposition (Malloy 1971:124-131, Corbett 1972:403, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 46). Furthermore, many civil rights were suspended (Zunes 2001).<sup>22</sup> On 06/17/1956 general elections were held. Hernán Siles Zuazo of the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR) was elected president with 84% of the vote, whilst the MNR won 61 of the 68 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and all 18 seats in the Senate.<sup>23</sup> Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. LIED confirms the absence of electoral competitiveness. Elections between 1956 and 1964 are scored by V-Dem's EF&FI as being of ambiguous freedom and fairness, while their CEI continues to score them as not clean. V-Dem's PCLI codes political liberties as not really present until 1952 and being in an ambiguous state from 1953 to 1963. LIED views political liberties as absent in this period. Based on Polity5's assessment, during this period, the executive encountered substantial institutional limitations on power. During this regime period, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, whereas V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were absent.

11/04/1964 End Electoral Autocracy/Start Military Autocracy: A military coup led by General and Vice President René Barrientos, former head of the army, along with General Alfredo Ovendo, the Commander of the Bolivian Air Forces, overthrew the MNR government (Corbett 1972:408-410, Wagner 1991, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 46). According to V-Dem's PCLI political liberties were not really present during this period. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive's constraints fell into Intermediate Category 1, between unlimited authority and slight limitations. For the year 1965, V-Dem's JCE indicates that judicial constraints on the executive are limited. At the same time, V-Dem's LCE shows no value, which, with appropriate caution, can be interpreted as an absence of legislative constraints on the executive. For 1966, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were absent, and V-Dem's LCE is similarly interpreted as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also absent. For this time regarding to LIED the political liberties were still absent, while V-Dem's PCLI scores decreased into a range which we interpret as not really present. According to our observations, no multiparty legislative and executive elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED.

07/03/1966 End Military Autocracy/Start Electoral Autocracy: On this date, general elections which are not considered to be free and fair took place. The presidential election was won by Barrientos. Although he was a general, his government substantially civilianized (Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 46) and the regime is classified as an electoral autocracy. Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. Its elections, however, are scored as not competitive by LIED, not really free or fair by V-Dem's EF&FI and not clean by their CEI. V-Dem's PCLI as well as LIED code political liberties as absent for this period. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive's constraints fell into Intermediate Category 1, between unlimited authority and slight limitations. During this regime period, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were absent, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also absent.

09/26/1969 End Electoral Autocracy/Start Military Autocracy: Frustrated with the civilian government and having presidential ambitions of his own, General Ovando disposed of the Siles Salinas regime and the civilian institutions (Corbett 1972: 416). The coup led to a regime controlled by the Superior Council of the Armed Forces with a rotating chair (Corbett 1972: 416-419, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 46-47). On 10/06/1970 armed uprisings persisted through the Ovando dictatorship and to the dismay of the rightist military commanders, Ovando frequently offered them concessions or amnesty rather than brutal defeat. The military forces launched a coup with the intention of replacing Ovando's policy of appeasement. A three-headed junta consolidated power for a brief period of time in the aftermath. According to our observations, no multiparty legislative and executive elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. In 1969, as per Polity5's categorization, the executive experienced minimal limitations on decision-making, placing it in the first intermediate category. For the relevant period, V-Dem's JCE indicates that judicial constraints on the executive are absent. Simultaneously, V-Dem's LCE shows no value, which, with appropriate caution, can be interpreted as an absence of legislative constraints on the executive. LIED identifies political liberties as absent and V-Dem's PCLI is also classified by us as indicating that political liberties were absent.

10/07/1970 End Military Autocracy/Start Military Autocracy: After the formation of the neutral junta, General Juan Torres overthrew it and established himself alone as president by using a violent left-wing splinter of the military. He was supported by different military factions. Political liberties were not really present and absent for this period according to LIED and our interpretation of V-Dem's PCLI. In this timeframe, V-Dem's JCE indicates that judicial constraints on the executive are absent. Simultaneously, V-Dem's LCE shows no value, which, with appropriate caution, can be interpreted as an absence of legislative constraints on the executive.

08/21/1971 End Military Autocracy/Start Military Autocracy: Colonel Hugo Banzer allied with the MNR, the FSB, and a rightist faction of the military launched a coup against military dictator General Juan José Torres. Banzer emerged as the head of a junta that outlawed unions and political parties (Corbett 1972: 424, Wagner 1991, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 46-47). Stringent measures were taken to suppress any opposition. In 1974, he withstood two coup attempts and effectively quashed a peasant uprising.<sup>24</sup> On 07/21/1978 General Juan Perede Asbun won elections, but they were annulled due to fraud. Asbun overthrew Banzer and assumed the presidency. On 11/24/1978, a group of democratically oriented generals led by David Padilla rejected Asbun's leadership due to vagueness with regards to elections and his incompetence and overthrew him. After years of military rule, there was a peaceful transition to a civilian government in 1979 when General David Padilla opted to transfer power to whoever won the presidential elections 1979.<sup>25</sup> According to our observations, no multiparty legislative and executive elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. Per FH's evaluation for the years 1972 and 1973, the country scores from 9 to 10 as not free, which we categorize as rather not free. In 1974 and 1975 the country is scored from 11 to 14 as not free, which corresponds to our interpretation of not free. For the years 1976 and 1977 under consideration, a score between 9 and 10 makes the country not free, which aligns with our interpretation of rather not free. In 1978 the country is partly free with a score of 8, which we interpret as rather not free. According to V-Dem's

PCLI and LIED political liberties were absent from 1971 to 1978. Between 1970 and 1977, as per Polity5's classification, the executive wielded unrestricted authority without any formal limitations. In 1978 and 1979, according to Polity5, the executive's constraints fell into Intermediate Category 1, between unlimited authority and slight limitations. From 1972 to 1978, V-Dem's JCE indicates that judicial constraints on the executive are absent. Simultaneously, V-Dem's LCE shows no value, which, with appropriate caution, can be interpreted as an absence of legislative constraints on the executive. For the year 1979, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were absent, and V-Dem's LCE is similarly interpreted as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also absent.

07/01/1979 End Military Autocracy/Start Electoral Autocracy: On this date, multiparty elections occurred after the military's return to barracks, with General David Padilla ensuring a freer process despite a tense and bitter atmosphere among the candidates.<sup>26</sup> No candidate won a majority, which required congress to choose the president. However, Congress was deadlocked and eventually chose the head of the Senate as interim president until a new election to be held in 1980 (Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 47). The democratic quality of the following is disputed. AF, BMR, BR, LIED and CGV classify the regime as democratic, RoW, LIED and PRC as an autocracy or namely an electoral autocracy. Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. LIED classified the 1979 elections as competitive. V-Dem's EF&FI indicates an ambiguous state regarding the freedom and fairness of the elections. Their CEI indicates that they were not clean. Political liberties were not really present in 1979 according to V-Dem's PCLI and not present according to LIED. As per Polity5's categorization, the executive experienced minimal limitations on decision-making, placing it in the first intermediate category. According to our coding rules the regime was an electoral autocracy.

11/01/1979 End Electoral Autocracy/Start Military Autocracy: On this date, a military coup led by Colonel Alberto Natusch, overthrew the interim government of Wálter Guevara. The coup was marked by significant violence, resulting in numerous deaths during the first week of November. Natusch remained in power for only 16 days due to widespread popular resistance, including a general strike, and a lack of support within the military. According to our observations, no multiparty legislative and executive elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED.

11/16/1979 End Military Autocracy/Start Electoral Autocracy: On this date, Natusch was forced to resign under popular pressure of a general strike and lack of support by the military. However, negotiations between the military and the congress ended in the compromise stepping down on condition that Congress must name a different interim president to oversee the transition. Lidia Tejada, the president of the Chamber of Deputies, was appointed as new interim president. According to LIED multiparty executive and legislative were held. LIED identifies political liberties as absent, while V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as indicating that political liberties are not really present. During this regime period, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were absent, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also absent.

07/17[&18]/1980 End Electoral Autocracy/Start Military Autocracy: When the general elections results favored the leftists, a military group pressured President Lidia Gueiler to install (her cousin) General García Meza as Commander of the Army. On 07/18/1980, right wing elements of the army allied with the drug trade led by General Garcia Meza seized power in a violent coup (aka Cocaine Coup). Power was consolidated in a Junta of Commanders around General Meza (Wagner 1991, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 47).<sup>27</sup> Many of the officers involved had been part of the Hugo Banzer dictatorship.<sup>28</sup> When portions of the citizenry resisted, as they had done in the failed putsch of November 1979, it resulted in dozens of deaths. Many were tortured. Allegedly, the Argentine Army unit Batallón de Inteligencia 601 participated in the coup.<sup>29</sup> Having suffered significant damage to its reputation due to the excesses of the 1980–82 dictatorship, the military confronted two choices: either call for fresh elections or acknowledge the results from 1980. However, it became increasingly apparent that the nation was on the brink of descending into civil war before new elections could take place. Given these circumstances, the military declared in September 1982 that, to avoid the cost of new

elections and prevent further unrest, it would reconvene the legislature elected in 1980 and accept whoever it selected as the president.<sup>30</sup> According to our observations, no multiparty legislative and executive elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. As classified by FH for this regime period, the country is scored from 11 to 14 as not free, which corresponds to our interpretation of not free. Political liberties were absent for this period (V-Dem PCLI, LIED). In 1981, as per Polity5's classification, the executive wielded unrestricted authority without any formal limitations. For the year 1981, V-Dem's JCE indicates that judicial constraints on the executive are absent. Simultaneously, V-Dem's LCE shows no value, which, with appropriate caution, can be interpreted as an absence of legislative constraints on the executive. For the following year, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, and V-Dem's LCE is similarly interpreted as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also limited.

10/05/1982 End Military Autocracy/Start Electoral Democracy: Congress reconvened on 09/23 and reconfirmed the 1980 election results. Hernán Siles became president (Haggard/Kaufman/Teo 2016: 16, Wagner 1991, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 47). Although Siles had difficulties controlling the overall situation and the various political and institutional actors, he did not resort to extra-constitutional means but respected the hard-won democratic standards.<sup>31</sup> Due to social protests and economic mismanagement, president Hernán Siles Zuazo called an early election, which took place on 07/14/1985. In the second round of voting, Paz Estenssoro's Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR) obtained most of the votes.<sup>32</sup> In line with other datasets like BMR, BR, GWF, HTW, MCM, PRC we code this regime period as democratic. According to the Va-PoReg classification is an electoral democracy. Under Paz Estenssoro the political and civil liberties were restricted to gain control over the economic situation, Labor Unions were repressed. When protests arose, citizens were subjected to a curfew, and travel across the country was limited. Raids were conducted on universities and opposition gatherings, and numerous union leaders were abducted, subsequently being transported to prison camps in the Amazon until the strikes were halted.<sup>33</sup> Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. Elections since then have mostly been scored as competitive by LIED, free and fair by V-Dem's EF&FI and as clean by their CEI. Per FH's scoring for the period until 1994, the country is classified as free with a score of 5, which falls into our interpretation of the rather free category. In 1995 a score of 6 to 7 for the assessed regime period designates Bolivia as partly free, which aligns with our interpretation of rather free. In 1996 the country is classified again as free with a score of 5 and from 1997 to 2001 it is categorized as free with a score between 2 and 4, which corresponds to our interpretation of free. As per FH's classification for 2002, the country receives a score of 5 as free, which we categorize as rather free. From 2003 onwards, a score of 6 to 7 for the assessed regime period designates the country as partly free, which aligns with our interpretation of rather free. After a period during which political liberties were absent, LIED classifies political liberties as present from 1991 to 2004. After 2005 LIED codes political liberties as absent. V-Dem's PCLI classifies the presence of political liberties as ambiguous in 1982 and as present from 1983 to 2016. Since 2016 V-Dem's PCLI scores decreased into a range which we interpret as political liberties were somewhat present. From 1983 to 2008, based on Polity5's assessment, the executive was either equal to or subordinate to other institutions, demonstrating strong constraints on decision-making authority. Between 2009 and 2014, according to Polity5, the executive's constraints fell into Intermediate Category 3, between substantial limitations and executive parity or subordination. On 10/12/2014, during Morales' second presidential term in office, he began to speak openly of communitarian socialism as the ideology that he desired for Bolivia's future.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, the Bolivian legislature (dominated by the incumbent party MAS) brought forward „a dubious legal reinterpretation” of Law No. 381 (promulgated in May 2013), that allowed Morales to run for a third term in 2014 and even ratified a ruling that paved the way for him to run for a fourth term in office (Sanchez-Sibony 2021:128). The parliament dominated by incumbent MAS party also issued laws to control and repress civil society (Sanchez-Sibony 2021: 129). Under Morales' presidential reign, electoral coercion on the local level was reported (Sanchez-Sibony 2021:124). On

11/10/2019 the 2019 Bolivian political crisis occurred after 21 days of civil protests following the disputed 2019 general election in which incumbent President Morales was initially declared the winner.<sup>35</sup> However, an audit by the OAS concluded that there were significant irregularities during the electoral process. 10/18/2020 was the final proposed date for the elections. Observers from the OAS, UNIORE and the UN reported that there were no fraudulent actions in the 2020 elections.<sup>36</sup> On 10/18/2020 presidential elections were held. Luis Arce (Movement Towards Socialism) won the elections with 55.1% of votes. Turnout was 88.4% and no irregularities were reported.<sup>37</sup> In addition, LIED classifies the elections as competitive except for 2019. Moreover, V-Dem's CEI underlines somewhat cleanliness except for 2019 when ambiguous outcomes are stated. V-Dem's EF&FI acknowledges free and fair elections. In 2019 ambiguous election conditions were given. Nevertheless, independent, and investigative journalists face harassment, and the judiciary is highly politicized and hampered by corruption.<sup>38</sup> On 06/26/2024, General Juan José Zúñiga, attempted a military coup. He led units of the Military Police in an assault on the government palace. After forcing their way inside, he and a group of soldiers confronted President Arce, demanding that he transfer power to Zúñiga. In response, President Arce commanded Zúñiga and his men to stand down.<sup>39</sup> Upon hearing of the attempted coup, thousands of protesters took to the streets of La Paz to confront the Military Police. President Arce dismissed General Zúñiga and appointed General José Sánchez as the new army chief. Sánchez ordered the coup units to stand down. Amid the rioting, soldiers arrested Zúñiga and took him into custody, withdrawing from the palace after about five hours. Zúñiga, once handcuffed, claimed Arce had orchestrated the coup to boost his image as a democracy defender. The government denies this, accusing Zúñiga of evading responsibility. Zúñiga and 19 other military leaders have been arrested, while others remain at large. Their court appearances are pending.<sup>40</sup> On 08/17/2025 general elections were held in which no presidential candidate was elected by a majority. The ruling Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) suffered a historic setback and now has hardly any representation in Congress. Therefore, the presidential runoff took place on 10/19/2025, where centrist Rodrigo Paz Pereira defeated conservative Jorge Quiroga with nearly 55% of the vote. This outcome marked the first time the presidency changed hands through a runoff election and signaled a dramatic shift in the country's political landscape.<sup>41</sup> As per Polity5's categorization, the executive's authority was significantly constrained, nearing parity with other branches, placing it in the third intermediate category. For 1983, V-Dem's JCE and LCE are both interpreted by us as indicating moderate constraints on the executive. For 1984, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were robust. From 1985 to 1996, V-Dem's JCE and LCE are both interpreted by us as indicating moderate constraints on the executive. Between 1997 and 2005, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were robust. For the years 2006-2009, V-Dem's JCE and LCE are both interpreted by us as indicating moderate constraints on the executive. During 2010-2012, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, whereas V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were moderate. From 2013 to 2016, V-Dem's JCE and LCE are both interpreted by us as indicating moderate constraints on the executive. For the year 2017, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited. For the years 2018, 2019 and 2021, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, and V-Dem's LCE is similarly interpreted as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also limited. For 2020, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were robust. For the years 2022 and 2023, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were moderate.

Electoral Democracy as of 07/01/2025 continued.

Additional sources (Alexander 1982, Centellas 2008, Corbett 1972, Gamarra 1997, Gamarra 2008, Klein 1969, Macmillan 2022, Malloy 1971, Sanchez-Sibony 2021, Times 1943, Wagner 1991)

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1825\\_in\\_Bolivia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1825_in_Bolivia)
  - <sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elections\\_in\\_Bolivia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elections_in_Bolivia)
  - <sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1920\\_Bolivian\\_coup\\_d%27%C3%A9tat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1920_Bolivian_coup_d%27%C3%A9tat)
  - <sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bautista\\_Saavedra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bautista_Saavedra)
  - <sup>5</sup> <https://uca.edu/politicalscience/dadm-project/western-hemisphere-region/bolivia-1917-present/>;  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/December\\_1920\\_Bolivian\\_legislative\\_election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/December_1920_Bolivian_legislative_election)
  - <sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bautista\\_Saavedra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bautista_Saavedra)
  - <sup>7</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elections\\_in\\_Bolivia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elections_in_Bolivia)
  - <sup>8</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hernando\\_Siles\\_Reyes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hernando_Siles_Reyes)
  - <sup>9</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlos\\_Blanco\\_Galindo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlos_Blanco_Galindo)
  - <sup>10</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/event/Chaco-War>; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel\\_Salamanca](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Salamanca)
  - <sup>11</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1934\\_Bolivian\\_coup\\_d%27%C3%A9tat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1934_Bolivian_coup_d%27%C3%A9tat)
  - <sup>12</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elections\\_in\\_Bolivia#Direct\\_elections\\_with\\_restricted\\_suffrage,\\_1839\\_and\\_1850-1938](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elections_in_Bolivia#Direct_elections_with_restricted_suffrage,_1839_and_1850-1938)
  - <sup>13</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germ%C3%A1n\\_Busch#1936\\_coup\\_d%C3%A9tat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germ%C3%A1n_Busch#1936_coup_d%C3%A9tat)
  - <sup>14</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germ%C3%A1n\\_Busch#1936\\_coup\\_d%C3%A9tat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germ%C3%A1n_Busch#1936_coup_d%C3%A9tat)
  - <sup>15</sup> <http://www.chisols.org/narratives.html> , see narratives for version 5.0, Bolivia\_R: 4.
  - <sup>16</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gualberto\\_Villarroel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gualberto_Villarroel)
  - <sup>17</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government\\_Junta\\_of\\_Bolivia\\_\(1946%E2%80%931947\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_Junta_of_Bolivia_(1946%E2%80%931947))
  - <sup>18</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1947\\_Bolivian\\_general\\_election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1947_Bolivian_general_election)
  - <sup>19</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mamerto\\_Urriola](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mamerto_Urriola); [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enrique\\_Hertzog](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enrique_Hertzog)
  - <sup>20</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mamerto\\_Urriola](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mamerto_Urriola)
  - <sup>21</sup> <https://www.onwar.com/data/bolivia1951.html>
  - <sup>22</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bolivian\\_National\\_Revolution#Controversy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bolivian_National_Revolution#Controversy)
  - <sup>23</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1956\\_Bolivian\\_general\\_election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1956_Bolivian_general_election)
  - <sup>24</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Hugo-Banzer-Suarez>
  - <sup>25</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1979\\_Bolivian\\_general\\_election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1979_Bolivian_general_election)
  - <sup>26</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1979\\_Bolivian\\_general\\_election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1979_Bolivian_general_election)
  - <sup>27</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Junta\\_of\\_Commanders\\_of\\_the\\_Armed\\_Forces\\_1980\\_\(Bolivia\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Junta_of_Commanders_of_the_Armed_Forces_1980_(Bolivia))
  - <sup>28</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luis\\_Garc%C3%ADa\\_Meza](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luis_Garc%C3%ADa_Meza)
  - <sup>29</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luis\\_Garc%C3%ADa\\_Meza](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luis_Garc%C3%ADa_Meza)
  - <sup>30</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hern%C3%A1n\\_Siles\\_Zuazo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hern%C3%A1n_Siles_Zuazo)
  - <sup>31</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hern%C3%A1n\\_Siles\\_Zuazo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hern%C3%A1n_Siles_Zuazo)
  - <sup>32</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Bolivia\\_\(1982%E2%80%93present\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Bolivia_(1982%E2%80%93present)).
  - <sup>33</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V%C3%ADctor\\_Paz\\_Estenssoro](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V%C3%ADctor_Paz_Estenssoro)
  - <sup>34</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2014\\_Bolivian\\_general\\_election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2014_Bolivian_general_election)
  - <sup>35</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019\\_Bolivian\\_political\\_crisis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019_Bolivian_political_crisis)
  - <sup>36</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019\\_Bolivian\\_political\\_crisis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019_Bolivian_political_crisis)
  - <sup>37</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/country/bolivia/freedom-world/2022>
  - <sup>38</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/country/bolivia/freedom-world/2022>
  - <sup>39</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/6/27/bolivia-foils-military-coup-attempt-all-you-need-to-know>
  - <sup>40</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/jun/29/bolivias-president-accused-of-plotting-coup-against-himself-to-boost-popularity>; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2024\\_Bolivian\\_coup\\_attempt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2024_Bolivian_coup_attempt)
  - <sup>41</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2025\\_Bolivian\\_general\\_election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2025_Bolivian_general_election)
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