

Ecuador — Va-PoReg Country Report

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03/13/1830 Start Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy: On 05/24/1822 Gran Colombia (and Ecuador as part of it) declared its independence from Spain. On 03/13/1830 the Republic of Ecuador became independent after the dissolution of Gran Colombia. Instability characterized much of the rule of the first president, Juan José Flores, fueled by conflict between liberals from Guayaquil and Quito-based conservatives - a schism that endured for more than a century (Macmillan 2022). In the constitution of 1861 property requirements for voting were abolished but were replaced by literacy requirements, which lasted until 1978 (Kellam 2013: 29, Engerman/Sokoloff 2005: 912). In the 1892 presidential election Luis Cordero Crespo was elected. Because of an international political scandal, he had to resign in 1895. His vice-president Vicente Lucio Salazar became acting president between 04/16/1895 and 09/04/1895.¹ In 1895 the Liberal Revolution took place in Ecuador. It was a period of radical social and political upheaval.² On 06/05/1895 Eloy Alfaro deposed President Vicente Lucio Salazar and declared himself dictator. His presidency was legitimized only in the aftermath on 01/17/1897 by a constituent convent which named him constitutional president. He stayed in office until 09/01/1901 (Maier 1971: 481-482).³ In 1901 presidential elections were held and Leónidas Plaza emerged as winner and assumed office 09/01/1901.⁴ The elections in 1905 saw Lizardo García emerge as winner.⁵ His presidency lasted only until 01/15/1906.⁶ For a second time Alfaro overthrew the elected government and assumed office.⁷ Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. LIED categorizes elections during this time as not competitive. V-Dem's EF&FI and CEI score them as not really free, fair or clean. On 01/16/1906 after the overthrow of the elected government of Lizardo García, Alfaro convened a constituent assembly, to draft a new constitution and elect him. For the second time he used this method, to gain legitimacy. Since the constitution stipulated a direct popular election of the president, This raises the question of whether presidents elected in such a manner can truly be considered constitutional, given that their rise to power did not initially align with constitutional provisions (Maier 1971: 481-482).⁸ On 08/12/1912 following Alfaro's refusal to relinquish power to his successor, an armed uprising ensued, resulting in Alfaro's overthrow (Stornaiolo 1999: 179-84, Casey et al. 2020: 5). Overall Alfaro's presidency is often praised for the implementation of liberal principles like freedom of speech and religion and secularization. However, he and the Liberal Revolution did not succeed in eradicating the influence of oligarchic elites (Farrington 2012: 19-20).⁹ Presidential elections were held regularly afterwards. The literacy requirements for voting remained applicable until 1978 (Kellam 2013: 29). Regarding the political liberties for this period, they were absent according to LIED. V-Dem's PCLI classified them as somewhat present until 1917 and as ambiguous from 1918 onwards. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive encountered slight limitations on decision-making power imposed by other institutions. For the year 1900, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were robust, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited. From 1901 to 1905, and 1912 to 1915, 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. In between those two timeframes, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were robust, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited. For

the years 1916-1919, 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. From 1920 onwards, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted 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 limited.

07/09/1925 End Electoral Oligarchical Autocracy/Start Military Autocracy: In July 1925, a group of junior officers, which called itself the Military League, carried out a military coup that overthrew President Gonzalo Córdova and assumed control of the government. The so called July Revolution was aligned against the plutocracy governing the nation.¹⁰ After an initial military junta, it was extended for six years – until 1931 –, with two provisional government juntas.¹¹ In 1926, the junta officially transferred power to Isidro Ayora (Mora 1991: 690, Deas 1986: 663-68, Casey et al. 2020: 5). In 1930 women's suffrage was granted. In article 13 of the constitution, it was established that every Ecuadorian citizen could vote who was an individual, whether male or female, aged 21 years or older, and proficient in reading and writing.¹² In August 1931, Ayora handed over power to Colonel Luis Larrea Alba. According to LIED no multiparty executive and legislative elections were held until 1928, from 1929 onward only legislative elections, which weren't multiparty, were held. 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 absent, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited. Moreover, political liberties are classified as absent by LIED, whereas V-Dem's PCLI considers their presence as ambiguous. While there were considerable civic elements in this regime period this non-electoral regime is classified as a military autocracy.

10/15/1931 End Military Autocracy/Start Non-Electoral Transitional Regime: On this day, Alba was replaced by Alfredo Baquerizo Moreno, who then initiated a call for general elections (Mora 1991: 693-94).¹³ The presidential election of 10/20–10/21/1931 in Ecuador was formally a multicandidate contest, but it did in the end not mark a transition to an electoral regime. First, the electoral outcome was not implemented. Neptalí Bonifaz Ascázubi, the winner, was disqualified by Congress in early 1932 due to Peruvian citizenship, which delegitimized the election ex post. Power remained with transitional elites, not an elected executive. Second, the election took place without institutionalized party competition. Candidates represented loose elite factions rather than legal parties. In the whole period Moreno, the transitional executive remained, the effective head of the executive. He was not elected, and there were no effective judicial or legislative constraints. V-Dem shows absent judicial and weak legislative checks, indicating a personalized autocratic structure. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive encountered slight limitations on decision-making power imposed by other institutions. During this regime period, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were absent, whereas V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited. For this short regime period, political liberties remained absent according to LIED and can be interpreted as ambiguous according to V-Dem's PCLI.

10/30[-/31]/1932 End Non-Electoral Transitional Regime/Start Electoral Hybrid Regime: On this date, the first multiparty elections took place, which were won by Juan de Dios Martínez, thus completing the transition to an electoral regime. Electoral fraud contributed to Martínez' victory¹⁴ and the entire period from the retreat of Isidro Ayora in 1931 to 1934 was marked by economic and political instability. In October 1933, Jose Maria Velasco of the Conservative Party won presidential elections. He assumed the presidency in September 1934 (Mora 1991: 694, Casey et al. 2020: 6).¹⁵ He had won with an overwhelming majority. This presidency was the first of his five periods overall, it lasted only eleven months. He was ousted by the military when he attempted to seize dictatorial powers by dissolving Congress and imprisoning his legislative adversaries (Rudolph 1991: 30). Because this approach failed, we do not consider the regime to be an autocracy, as neither Martínez or Velasco acquired a sufficient base of authority. Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. LIED

categorizes the election as not competitive. V-Dem's EF&FI scores the electoral freedom and fairness as ambiguous. Their CEI scores the election as not clean. Moreover, political liberties remained absent according to LIED and V-Dem's PCLI indicates an ambiguous state regarding political liberties. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive encountered slight limitations on decision-making power imposed by other institutions. For most of the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted 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 limited. For the year 1935, 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.

08/21/1935 End Electoral Autocracy/Start Military Autocracy: In August 1935, Velasco was ousted from power in a military coup (Mora 1991: 695, Casey et al. 2020: 6).¹⁶ On 09/26/1936, Antonio Pons was appointed as the interim president. However, instead of organizing elections, he relinquished power back to the armed forces. Subsequently, the junta installed Federico Paez as the dictator, and his regime was marked by extensive repression (Mora 1991: 695-96, Casey et al. 2020: 6). Furthermore, LIED still considers political liberties as absent and V-Dem's PCLI as ambiguous. As per Polity5's classification, the executive's authority was subject to minor institutional constraints during this time. 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.

10/23/1937 End Military Autocracy/Start Military Autocracy: General Alberto Enríquez Gallo led a military coup that overthrew Federico Paez. Following the coup, Enríquez assumed power (Mora 1991: 696-97, Casey et al. 2020: 6). According to LIED no multiparty executive and legislative elections were held. As per Polity5's classification, the executive's authority was subject to minor institutional constraints during this time. LIED identifies political liberties as absent and V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as ambiguous regarding the status of political liberties. 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.

08/10/1938 End Military Autocracy/Start Personalist Autocracy: On this date Enríquez established a Constituent Assembly and handed power over. The Constituent Assembly selected Aurelio Mosquera as president, but he dissolved the assembly and declared himself dictator, implementing a harsh campaign of repression (Mora 1991: 696-97, Casey et al. 2020: 6). Mosquera was elected head of the Ecuadorian Radical Liberal Party. He was also vice president of the Chamber of Deputies and of the Senate.¹⁷ After dissolving the National Assembly, Mosquera did convene an extraordinary Congress with two chambers in February 1939. However, this new Congress was formed under conditions that favored his regime, and he strategically placed conservatives in key positions. This Congress functioned within the framework of the older 1906 constitution, which had been reestablished by Mosquera, sidelining the more progressive constitution that was supposed to be in effect at the time. So, while a parliamentary body did exist, it operated under the influence and control of Mosquera's government, suggesting a lack of genuine legislative independence. Specific details on the mechanics of how the members were selected or appointed are not clear from the historical sources. However, it was clearly not a democratic election. His economic policies favored the liberal bourgeoisie and involved personal interests, such as the exemption of import duties for foreign companies in which he had personal stakes. This suggests a governance style that favored a particular class and his own interests, which is a characteristic often seen in personalist autocracies.¹⁸ He arrested some socialist and anarcho-sindicalist members of parliament, subdued an attempted coup, and removed five generals from their positions. Moreover, he placed conservatives in strategic positions, controlled municipal autonomy, and reorganized secular schools and universities, arguing that the student movement was politicized.¹⁹ According to LIED only executive elections were held. For this period, political liberties are coded as absent by LIED and can be interpreted as ambiguous based on V-Dem's PCLI. 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 absent, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited.

11/17/1939 End Personalist Autocracy/Start Non-Electoral Transitional Regime: After Mosquera's sudden death in November 1939, Carlos Arroyo del Rio, the president of the Senate, took over power (Mora 1991: 696-97, Casey et al. 2020: 6). 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 absent, whereas V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited.

01/10[-01/11]/1940 End Non-Electoral Transitional Regime/Start Electoral Autocracy: On these dates presidential elections took place. Arroyo employed widespread fraud to win the presidential election (Mora 1991: 696-97, Casey et al. 2020: 6). It was believed that Velasco had actually won the elections. During his presidency, Arroyo ruled through repression. The 1941 war with Peru became Arroyo's undoing. Ecuador was not prepared for the Peruvian invasion. Military mistakes were made upon the decisions of Arroyo, leaving the Ecuador's southern and eastern provinces nearly unprotected. The Protocol of Peace was signed in January 1942 between the two nations. This ended Peru's occupation. The Rio Protocol was ratified shortly afterwards (Rudolph 1991: 30-31). Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. LIED categorizes elections during this time as not competitive. V-Dem's EF&FI and CEI score them as not really free, fair and not clean. Additionally, according to LIED political liberties were still absent. V-Dem's PCLI outcomes remained unchanged at ambiguous. 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 absent, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited.

05/31/1944 End Electoral Autocracy/Start Non-Electoral Transitional Regime: A popular uprising supported by the Ecuadorian Democratic Alliance and by junior officers occurred on 05/28/1944. The so-called Glorious May Revolution led to the resignation of Carlos Arroyo on 05/31/1944. The Ecuadorian Democratic Alliance consisted of a wide array of Ecuadorian politicians of different political backgrounds (Fitch 1977:19, Becker 2000: 1-3, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014b: 57, Mora 1991: 699, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014a, Casey et al. 2020: 6).²⁰ Although the military was involved it was not "a traditional military or palace coup which has seemingly plagued much of Latin American history" (Becker 2003: 1). The aim was rather to ensure a civilian rule under Velasco (Becker 2003: 1-2). Velasco returned to Ecuador at the head of a multiparty coalition – the Ecuadorian Democratic Alliance. The military transferred power to the Democratic Alliance, which subsequently appointed Velasco as the president of the republic, garnering popular acclaim.²¹ In August 1944 a constituent assembly convened and began to work on a new constitution. It took seven months to complete it (Becker 2000: 6). Velasco vocally expressed his opposition to the new constitution and began to repress and persecute former supporters (Becker 2000: 9-10). According to LIED multiparty executive and legislative elections were held. The regime is to be classified as non-electoral transitional regime because no elections took place, Velasco was given the presidency by popular acclamation and the military, although involved in the popular uprisings, did not established a military junta but instead handed power directly to a civilian alliance. Besides, LIED still indicates the absence of political liberties. V-Dem's PCLI still considers their presence as ambiguous. 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 absent, whereas V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited.

03/30/1946 End Non-Electoral Transitional Regime/Start Personalist Autocracy: On this date Velasco declared himself dictator and suspended the 1945 constitution. More and more of his former left-wing supporters became alienated from him. The Socialists and Communists left the government. Velasco forced the Communist Party underground. His group of supporters now only included conservatives; there was

nothing left of the public acclaim that had brought Velasco into office. He convened a new Constituent Assembly to draft a much more conservative constitution. Leftists refused to take part in this process (Becker 2000: 10). Although very short-lived, this period has to be classified as personalist autocracy: Because Velasco seemed unwilling to accept institutional restrictions, forced the opposition underground through persecution and formed a constitution in his favor. While according to LIED multiparty executive and legislative elections took place, according to our judgement executive multiparty elections can be classified as present since Velasco was a popularly elected president but there was no popularly elected parliament in this period, considering the Constituent Assembly was not meant to function as a full legislative body. LIED identifies political liberties as absent, and V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as ambiguous regarding the state of political liberties. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted 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 limited.

08/23/1947 End Personalist Autocracy/Start Non-Electoral Transitional Regime: Velasco was ousted in a coup orchestrated by the Minister of Defense, Carlos Mancheno Cajas. Because Mancheno failed to gather wider support within the military, they reinstated the President's constitutional successor as an interim leader, who successfully restored the country to constitutional order, and subsequently, a civilian was elected by Congress to complete the President's term in office (Fitch 1977:39, Becker 2000:5, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014b: 57).²² On 09/16/1947 Carlos Julio Arosemena Tola was elected as president by parliament until 08/31/1948. Under his rule presidential elections were prepared.²³ According to LIED multiparty executive and legislative were held. From 1946 to 1948 political liberties remained absent per LIED and can be interpreted as ambiguous by V-Dem's PCLI. Based on Polity5's assessment, the executive faced slight limitations on power during this period. 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 moderate.

06/06/1948 End Non-Electoral Transitional Regime/Start Electoral Hybrid Regime: On this date presidential elections, for the first time, supervised by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, were held. The elections were won by Galo Plaza of the National Democratic Civic Movement.²⁴ Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. LIED categorizes elections during this period as competitive. V-Dem's EF&FI scores them as somewhat free and fair. Their CEI scores electoral cleanliness as ambiguous. LIED categorizes political liberties as absent. V-Dem's PCLI considers them as somewhat present until 1959. Since 1960 the outcomes changed to ambiguous. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive encountered slight limitations on decision-making power imposed by other institutions. During most of 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 moderate.

07/11/1963 End Electoral Hybrid Regime/Start Military Autocracy: Concerns over Ecuador's relationship with the United States and Monroy's vocal support of the Cuban Castro regime led to the armed force move against him. Between 1963 and 1966 Ecuador was governed by a military junta consisting of Admiral Ramón Castro Jijón, General Marcos Gándara Enríquez, General Luis Cabrera Sevilla and General Guillermo Freire Posso (Fitch 1977:61-63, Schodt 1987:82, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014b: 57). According to LIED no multiparty executive and legislative elections were held. While LIED still considers political liberties as absent, V-Dem's PCLI scores dropped back to not really present. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive held unlimited authority with no institutionalized constraints on decision-making power. 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.

03/30/1966 End Military Autocracy/Start Non-Electoral Transitional Regime: On 03/29/1966 facing an economic crisis, protests from students, union groups gained popular support and forced the junta to hand

power over to a civilian administration headed by Yerovi (Maier 1971: 506, Fitch 1977: 171f). Despite that Ecuador granted women suffrage in 1929, which was earlier than most independent countries in Latin America (except for Uruguay, which granted women suffrage in 1917), differences between men's and women's suffrage in Ecuador were only removed in 1967 with the establishment of a new constitution (before 1967 women's vote was optional, while that of men was compulsory; since 1967 it is compulsory for both sexes).²⁵ For these two years, political liberties were absent according to LIED. V-Dem's PCLI indicates a not real presence in 1966. In 1967 and 1968 the outcomes switched to a score that we interpret as ambiguous. 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 moderate.

06/02/1968 End Non-Electoral Transitional Regime/Start Electoral Hybrid Regime: On this date general elections were held in Ecuador (Fitch 1977:175, Freeman 1981, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014b: 57). The presidential election was won by José María Velasco of the National Velasquista Federation, who received 32.8% of the vote.²⁶ The prospects for Velasco's fifth presidency were poor: a lack of a majority in Congress, the failure to forge a coalition, a stalemate in the legislature, a high turnover of cabinet ministers and the looming fiscal crisis (Rudolph 1991: 40). To oversee the elections, the Organization of American States (OAS) sent three observers who monitored the process from 05/27/1968 to 06/12/1968. They concluded that the authorities were completely impartial, and the Armed Forces and Police conducted themselves impeccably. They also observed that the Electoral Supreme Court and Provincial Courts fully complied with the relevant laws and regulations. Furthermore, they highlighted the strong civic engagement displayed by the entire population during the events on 06/02 (Plaza 1968: 7-8). Quantitative indicators regarding the freeness and fairness of the elections are mixed. 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 competitive. V-Dem's EF&FI scores electoral freedom and fairness as ambiguous and their CEI classifies them as not really clean. AF classifies this period as personalist autocracy, BR as a civilian dictatorship, MCM as a multiparty autocracy, GWF and REIGN as a democracy and LIED as an exclusive democracy. In addition, LIED sees political liberties as absent. V-Dem's PCLI scores them as ambiguous for the whole period. On the other hand, Polity 5 sees substantial limitations on executive authority in place and classifies the country as an anocracy. For the year 1969, 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. Given all our indicators we classify the country as an electoral hybrid regime.

06/22/1970 End Electoral Hybrid Regime/Start Personalist Autocracy: President Velasco suspended in an autogolpe the constitution, dissolved the parliament and declared himself a civilian dictator. After the self-coup he ruled by decree supported by the military and arrested the opposition (Fitch 1977:175-176, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014b: 57). Velasco's crucial ally was his nephew and Minister of Defense, General Jorge Acosta Velasco, who consistently reorganized the high command to ensure the presence of Velasquistas in key positions.²⁷ Since the National Velasquista Federation was started in 1952 as an electoral vehicle and barely existed apart from election periods it cannot be regarded as a check on his personalist power. Regarding this regime our coding is in line with GWF and REIGN. However, like GWF and REIGN and different from AF we would not consider the whole period from the election on 06/02/1968 as a personalist autocracy. While according to LIED executive elections were present in this period, we disagree. The autogolpe nullified the legitimation by election in our view. The parliament was dissolved in this period. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive held unlimited authority with no institutionalized constraints on decision-making power. Regarding the political liberties, they remained absent according to LIED and ambiguous per V-Dem's PCLI. 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.

02/15/1972 End Personalist Autocracy/Start Military Autocracy: On this date, General Guillermo Rodríguez Lara, the commander of the army, led a coup which overthrew Velasco and suspended the elections. Lara ruled apart from a junta as president in the aftermath. The reason for the coup was that military leaders feared that the upcoming presidential election could seat an unstable, populist candidate at the head of government. According to LIED no multiparty executive and legislative elections were held. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive held unlimited authority with no institutionalized constraints on decision-making power. 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. 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. While LIED's outcomes regarding political liberties were still absent, V-Dem's PCLI scores switched to decreased to not really present since 1973.

01/11/1976 End Military Autocracy/Start Non-Electoral Transitional Regime: On this date, a new military junta led by Burbano as chairman took power from Lara and worked to transition the country to civilian rule (Fitch 1977:179, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014b: 58). According to LIED no multiparty executive and legislative elections were held. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive held unlimited authority with no institutionalized constraints on decision-making power. For the years 1977 and 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 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. Per FH's evaluation for this regime period, the country scores from 9 to 10 as not free, which we categorize as rather not free. For this period, political liberties were absent (LIED) and can be interpreted as not really present until 1977 and as ambiguous form 1978 onwards per V-Dem's PCLI.

04/29/1979 End Personalist Autocracy/Start Electoral Democracy: On this date, the second round of presidential elections and parliamentary elections were held. Both were considered free and fair (Schodt 1987:131, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014b: 58). The capability for citizens to alter their government through elections was evident, with the 1998 campaign suggesting a shift away from the perceived national reluctance towards electoral mechanisms for resolving political disputes. Constitutional assurances regarding freedom of expression, religion, and the formation of political parties were generally upheld. However, the judiciary, often weakened by pervasive corruption within the political framework, was overseen by a supreme court that, until 1997, had been appointed by the legislature, thus susceptible to political manipulation (Karatnycky 2000). Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. During this period, LIED categorizes elections as competitive. V-Dem's EF&FI scores them mostly as free and fair with brief periods of being somewhat free and fair in between. Their CEI similarly scores them mostly as clean and sometimes as somewhat clean. As per FH's classification for the regime period between 1979 and 1984, the country is considered free with a score ranging from 2 to 4, which we also interpret as free in our framework. Between 1985 and 1987 the country receives a score of 5 as free, which we categorize as rather free. For the period from 1988 and 1990 Ecuador is considered free with a score ranging from 2 to 4, which we also interpret as free in our framework. Per FH's scoring for 1991 to 1995, the country is classified as free with a score of 5, which falls into our interpretation of the rather free category. In 1996 and 1997, it scores between 6 and 7, categorized as partly free, which we interpret as rather free. For the remaining period of the regime, the country is classified as free with a score of 5, which falls into our interpretation of the rather free category. In addition to that, political liberties are still categorized as absent by LIED. V-Dem's PCLI outcomes varied between full and somewhat present in this period. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive was subordinate to or held equal power with other institutions, indicating executive parity or subordination. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's LCE

is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were robust. Our classification of V-Dem's JCE however alternates between the indication of moderate (1980-1984, 1989-1992, and 1997-1998) and limited (1985-1988, 1993-1996, and 1999-2000) judicial constraints on the executive. While most quantitative indicators indicate that Ecuador was a full/liberal democracy in this period according to our observations it falls into the category of an electoral democracy. Despite the promising developments, several factors undermined the robustness of Ecuador's democracy. The judiciary, while constitutionally independent, was often compromised by pervasive corruption, particularly within the Supreme Court, which was appointed by the legislature until 1997. This susceptibility to political manipulation weakened the checks and balances essential for a healthy democratic system. Additionally, the military maintained substantial influence over politics, exerting control through personal relationships and internal divisions within the officer corps. The presence of corruption, clientelism, and limited judicial independence indicated significant democratic deficits.

01/21/2000 End Electoral Democracy/Start Military (Rebel) Autocracy: President Jamil Mahuad was ousted by a coalition of Indigenous activists, led by CONAIE, the primary organization representing Indigenous peoples in Ecuador, and dissatisfied military officials, amid widespread protests against his harsh economic policies. Mahuad was compelled to flee the country. A temporary "junta of national salvation" was established by CONAIE and their military allies. However, this governance structure lasted less than 24 hours (Haggard/Kaufman/Teo 2016: 76).²⁸ While we agree with MCM that there was a military takeover at this date according to our observation it only lasted one day.²⁹

01/22/2000 End Military (Rebel) Autocracy/Start Electoral Democracy: The leadership of the military caused the dissolution of the junta. On 01/22/2000 the National Congress elected Gustavo Noboa as president.³⁰ Noboa took the oath of office as President in the Ministry of Defense, and Mahuad reluctantly went into exile. Although the failure of the junior officers' coup in support of constitutional succession garnered national and international attention, there is no doubt that the armed forces' involuntary and unconstitutional removal of Mahuad constituted a military coup d'état (Fitch 2005: 45). Therefore, while the procedure was in principle in accordance with the constitution, the regime is classified by Va-PoReg as an electoral democracy. The reason is that the elected president Mahuad was forced out of office by a non-elected actor, namely the military. Therefore, it is an actor who exercises power outside the constitutional order and limits the exercise of power of constitutional and elected bodies. MCM classifies the period as a military autocracy and CGV as a civilian autocracy, AF classifies the regime as personalist. BMR notes a non-democratic period from 2000 to 2002. Other datasets like GWF, HTW, LIED and RoW overlook the deficits of the period and classify the period as democratic. LIED categorizes the elections as competitive. V-Dem's EF&FI indicates that elections were free and fair while their CEI indicates that they were somewhat clean. However, in line with our qualitative observations. Throughout the early 2000s, Ecuador continued to hold regular presidential and parliamentary elections. While international observers generally deemed these elections as competitive, there were underlying issues that impeded genuine democratic practices. The Central Electoral Authority, despite its long-established role since 1923, remained heavily influenced by the executive branch, limiting its ability to ensure impartial and transparent electoral processes. Additionally, the military maintained a significant presence in politics, exerting pressure through personal relationships and internal divisions within the officer corps, which threatened the stability and fairness of the political landscape. On 11/24/2002, Lucio Gutiérrez Borbúa, a retired colonel who had taken part in the removal of Mahuad (an event commemorated in the full title of his small group, the Patriotic Society Party of January 21 – PSP), won in the second round of the presidential election by defeating Álvaro Noboa Pontón, who ran as the leader of the Institutional Renewal Party of National Action – PRIAN. The first round of the presidential election took place on 10/15/2006, with 13 initial candidates. It resulted in a runoff between Álvaro Noboa Pontón of the PRIAN, a right-of-center populist millionaire, and Rafael Correa Delgado, an economist, former finance minister, and leader of the left-wing bloc called the Country Alliance – AP (Lansford 2021). Under President Rafael Correa, who came to power in 2007, there was a noticeable centralization of authority. The 2008 Constitution expanded

presidential powers, allowing Correa to call national referenda, partially veto or modify legislation, and run for consecutive terms. These constitutional changes facilitated Correa's prolonged tenure and enabled him to influence key aspects of governance, including the judiciary and media (Lansford 2021). An essential tool at the president's disposal is the ability to partially veto or modify laws passed by the unicameral parliament. In such cases, the original legislation can only be restored with the approval of a two-thirds majority vote. Correa exploited this provision to alter laws as he pleased, even those proposed by his own legislative majority. The 2008 constitution introduced additional presidential powers, most notably lifting the ban on consecutive re-election of the president, previously in place in the 1998 Constitution. This change allowed Correa to serve multiple terms as president, running again in 2009 and subsequently in 2013. The 2008 document also grants Correa the power to dissolve the National Assembly and call for new elections, although he has not exercised this authority yet.³¹ However, he has occasionally used the threat of doing so to prevent resistance from lawmakers. Members of the legislative majority belonging to Correa's party, the Alianza País (AP), understand that their electoral prospects heavily rely on their 'charismatic leader. As a result, they rarely deviate from official party lines or defy orders from above (Conaghan 2016). Elections are largely considered free and fair by international observers.³² Ecuador possesses a strong and independent judiciary at higher levels, contributing to a functioning system of checks and balances. However, the lower-level judiciary struggles with prosecuting drug trafficking organizations.³³ LIED categorizes the elections for this entire period as competitive. V-Dem's EF&FI scores them as free and fair until 2012, after which it only scores them as somewhat free and fair. Their CEI scores them as somewhat clean for almost the entire period and even as clean between 2003 and 2005. Per FH, for the regime period until 2020, the country scores between 6 and 7, categorized as partly free, which we interpret as rather free. 2021 and 2022 the country is classified as free with a score of 5, which falls into our interpretation of the rather free category. From 2023 onwards, it has again been rated as partly free with a score of 6, which we interpret as rather free in our framework. Furthermore, political liberties are still not achieved according to LIED, while V-Dem's PCLI declares full political liberties except between 2009 and 2017 when they view them as somewhat present. While the quantitative indicators still point into the direction of a liberal democracy according to our observations based on the literature we have to classify the regime as an electoral democracy. The period saw significant political unrest and violence, particularly surrounding elections. High levels of corruption, clientelism, and the influence of criminal groups severely impacted the integrity of the electoral process. Hence, according to our observations V-Dem's EF&FI seems too high. Incidents such as the assassination of political candidates and threats against journalists created an environment of fear and intimidation, further restricting political competition and media freedom. Despite high voter turnout rates, these conditions prevented the elections from being fully free and fair, as they hindered the ability of candidates to campaign effectively and voters to make informed choices without coercion or fear. We rate the quality of the elections as ambiguous. On 23/07/2023 after President Guillermo Lasso Mendoza was impeached in May 2023, he invoked a constitutional clause that allowed him to trigger early elections by dissolving the legislature. The election period was marred by heavy violence, spreading fear among voters and forcing candidates to limit campaigning. V-Dem's CEI still scores the election as somewhat clean. Moreover, the elections were free and fair according to V-Dem's EF&FI. Still according to our observations this is a misjudgement since the quality of the elections is only ambiguous. Mayor Augustin Inriago Quijano was killed in July and shortly after, on 08/09, presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio Valencia was assassinated. Danie Noboa Azín won in runoff elections in October. The electoral period saw such a spike in violence that Freedom House downgraded Ecuador's status to partly free. The violence extended to media representatives, further restricting journalists. FH reports indicate that self-censorship has increased due to pressure from criminal groups and fear of violence, leading some journalists to leave the country.³⁴ While turnout remained high at 82% this period cannot be classified as a full democracy due to the effects of high violence including obstacles to the electoral process, fear in voters and restrictive effects on media freedom.³⁵ From 2000 to 2006, as per Polity5's categorization, the executive's authority was significantly constrained, nearing parity with other branches, placing it in the third intermediate category. Since 2007, as per Polity5's classification, the

executive experienced moderate limitations on authority, placing it in the second intermediate category. From 2001 to 2006, 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 year 2007, 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. From 2008 to 2012, 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 the period 2013-2016, 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 the year 2017, 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. Since 2018, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, whereas V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were robust.

Electoral Democracy as of 07/01/2025 continued.

Additional sources (Conaghan 1994, Hudson 1991, Isaacs 1993, Levitt 2007, Sonntag 2001)

Notes

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luis_Cordero_Crespo; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vicente_Lucio_Salazar

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberal_Revolution_of_1895

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eloy_Alfaro

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1901_Ecuadorian_presidential_election

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1905_Ecuadorian_presidential_election

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lizardo_Garc%C3%ADa

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eloy_Alfaro#

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eloy_Alfaro#

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eloy_Alfaro#

¹⁰ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/July_Revolution_\(Ecuador\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/July_Revolution_(Ecuador))

¹¹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/July_Revolution_\(Ecuador\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/July_Revolution_(Ecuador))

¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_suffrage_in_Ecuador

¹³ https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfredo_Baquerizo_Moreno

¹⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1932_Ecuadorian_presidential_election

¹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1933_Ecuadorian_presidential_election

¹⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jos%C3%A9_Mar%C3%ADa_Velasco_Ibarra

¹⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aurelio_Mosquera

¹⁸ https://www.biografiasyvidas.com/biografia/m/mosquera_narvaez.htm

¹⁹ https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aurelio_Mosquera_Narv%C3%A1ez

²⁰ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ecuador_\(1925%E2%80%931944\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ecuador_(1925%E2%80%931944))

²¹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ecuador_\(1925%E2%80%931944\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ecuador_(1925%E2%80%931944))

²² <https://www.onwar.com/data/ecuador1947.html>

²³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlos_Julio_Arosemena_Tola

²⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1948_Ecuadorian_presidential_election

²⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_suffrage; <https://constitutionnet.org/country/constitutional-history-ecuador>

²⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1968_Ecuadorian_general_election

²⁷ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ecuador_\(1960%E2%80%931990\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Ecuador_(1960%E2%80%931990))

²⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2000_Ecuadorian_coup_d%27%C3%A9tat

²⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2000_Ecuadorian_coup_d%27%C3%A9tat

- ³⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gustavo_Noboa
- ³¹ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Ecuador_2021?lang=en
- ³² <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/ECU>
- ³³ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/ecuador/freedom-world/2024>
- ³⁴ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/ecuador/freedom-world/2024>
- ³⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2023_Ecuadorian_general_election

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